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JUNE 2011

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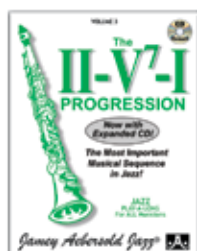
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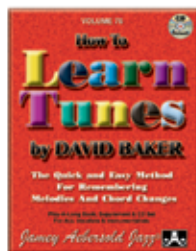
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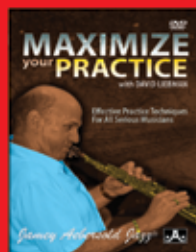
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JUNE 2011 Inside

ON THE COVER

26 **Thelonious Sphere Monk** *Growing Up Monk*

BY FRANK ALKYER

What's it like to grow up the son of jazz royalty? With the 25th anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz approaching, DownBeat sat down with drummer T.S. Monk Jr.—namesake of the Hall of Fame pianist and chairman of the board of trustees of the Monk Institute—for a live interview at the Midwest Band Clinic last December. In addition, DownBeat Publisher Frank Alkyer checks out recent Monk tribute recordings, and contributor John Murph tracks the progress made by the Monk Institute and its profound impact on the state of jazz and education during the past quarter-century.



Photo shoot staging of T.S. Monk by Denise Pruitt. Makeup by Sierre Monk.
Cover photography of Thelonious Monk by Michael Ochs/Michael Ochs Archives/Getty Images.

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Go for the Sound

When 'Daddy' Became Thelonious Monk

T.S. Monk is a man of many words when it comes to his father, the revered Thelonious Monk. And rightly so. There's much to say about one of the most intriguing figures in jazz history. So much so, in fact, that we could not begin to include everything that Monk Jr. had to say about Monk Sr. in our cover article that begins on page 26. So below is one more fascinating tidbit. During our interview, I asked T.S. why he speaks of his father as "Thelonious" instead of "Dad." Here's his response:



"The other day, I realized that I never, never—in the 33 years of my life that he was here too—I never ever once called him 'Thelonious.' I do now because when I was 19 years old, and I was practicing like crazy every day on my drums, this new thing came out called stereo. At this time there was a company called Lafayette Electronics. And Lafayette was a mail-order company where you could buy all the stuff you get from Radio Shack now. Lafayette Electronics had a store in New York, and I said, 'I want to build me a stereo.'

"So, I go down to Lafayette Electronics, and I buy this huge speaker cabinet. And I buy this 15-inch speaker, and I'm building a stereo. Now at the time, I did not put two and two together and realize that stereo means two speakers. [laughs] It's 1969, and I'm pretty sure Sly and the Family Stone had released their *Dance To The Music* album. And I was a child of my time. Thelonious was very big on that. Be of your time, don't be of my time. I was listening to the Motown sound, to Sly and the Family Stone, to the Beatles and the Byrds and all this stuff.

"I've got to test this speaker, but I can't put Sly and the Family Stone or any of that stuff on because that's loud and powerful, and I don't know how good my speaker is. I think I need to put something on the speaker that's laidback and kind of jive and, you know... *milquetoast*. So, I go to grab one of my father's trio records, right? And I put this record on, and I drop the needle down.

"It was a summer afternoon, I'll never forget it. I stick my head in the speaker because I want to hear what the speaker sounds like. But the head of this tune goes by. It was one of Thelonious' truly difficult compositions for a pianist to play. It's a composition called 'Work.' I listen to the head of this tune go by and I said, 'Wow, that was really tricky. How'd he do that?' So, I brought the needle back, and I played it again. Again, I wondered, 'How'd he do that? Is he crossing his fingers? How's he doing that?' I put it back again, and I had completely forgotten about the fidelity of my speaker. It was that very afternoon that I realized that the guy in the next room to me, he was Daddy, but he was also this guy that I had been hearing about all my life. He was *Thelonious Monk*.

"On that afternoon, it was the first time in my life that I got scared to death that my daddy is Thelonious Monk. 'Oh, shit!' And he's been listening to me banging on my drums for five years, day and night, and he hasn't said one word, not one single word."

As T.S. Monk notes in the article, that didn't really bother him. Thelonious would only say something if his son wasn't playing well. In the Monk household, being hip and playing hip were expected. No words were needed unless you *weren't* playing hip.

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George Shearing

Shearing Remembered

My father, Les Ogden, was a lifelong fan of the late George Shearing. He was also a minor, semi-professional singer with a beautiful, rich bass-baritone voice. He sang at the weekends at various clubs in the north of England. One day many years ago, he bought a microphone and decided to do a sing-over to some of Shearing's recordings. He discovered Shearing's postal address and mailed the tape to him. Weeks and months passed, but alas, there was no response.

Many years later, George was playing at Stoke-on-Trent, a town 40 miles away. Despite my father's love of Shearing, he had never had the opportunity of seeing him live. The concert was wonderful. At the end of this sublime performance, Shearing was escorted from the stage, amid a cacophony of applause from enthusiastic fans.

My father and I approached Shearing, who was signing autographs. My father waited his turn with me, and finally stood before Shearing, and just tentatively said, "George—"

Shearing nodded suddenly, and with a smile replied, "Les—is that Les Ogden? I remember you sending me a tape years ago—it was wonderful!" My father broke down in tears. Unbelievably, The Great Man had recognized my father's voice from just one word.

We drove home that evening in a state of bewildered bliss.

ANTHONY OGDEN
ANTHONYOGDENFINEARTIST@HOTMAIL.COM

Bowen His Own Man

In Chris Robinson's review of Ralph Bowen's *Power Play*, the descriptions of Bowen's and Orrin Evans' playing came in the form of comparisons to John Coltrane, Michael Brecker and Bill Evans ("Reviews," April). An album review should be filled with rich and original language, bringing the reader into the music. There is an abundance of wonderful language available that evokes Bowen's individuality far better than generic comparisons to jazz masters.

TOM HARDING
HALIFAX, CANADA



Joe Morello

Gentleman Joe Morello

To every drummer who ever had the honor to hear the late Joe Morello play, even the mention of his name causes one's pulse to quicken ("The Beat," May). Among my flood of memories is one Saturday afternoon in Chicago when Joe put on a clinic for 300 drummers that left them gasping in disbelief. His renowned left-hand technique turned his snare into a pile-driving machine, while his right hand produced hypnotizing bobbing and weaving tom-tom counter-rhythms, accompanied by his incredibly agile and speeding right foot, which made the wood beater-ball on his bass completely disappear.

A world-famous drummer and a master teacher, Joe also was always a gentleman, unfailingly kind to all.

All drummers should get Joe's *It's About Time*, and no jazz lover should be without *The Dave Brubeck Quartet At Carnegie Hall*, which includes one of the greatest drum solos ever recorded, "Castilian Drums."

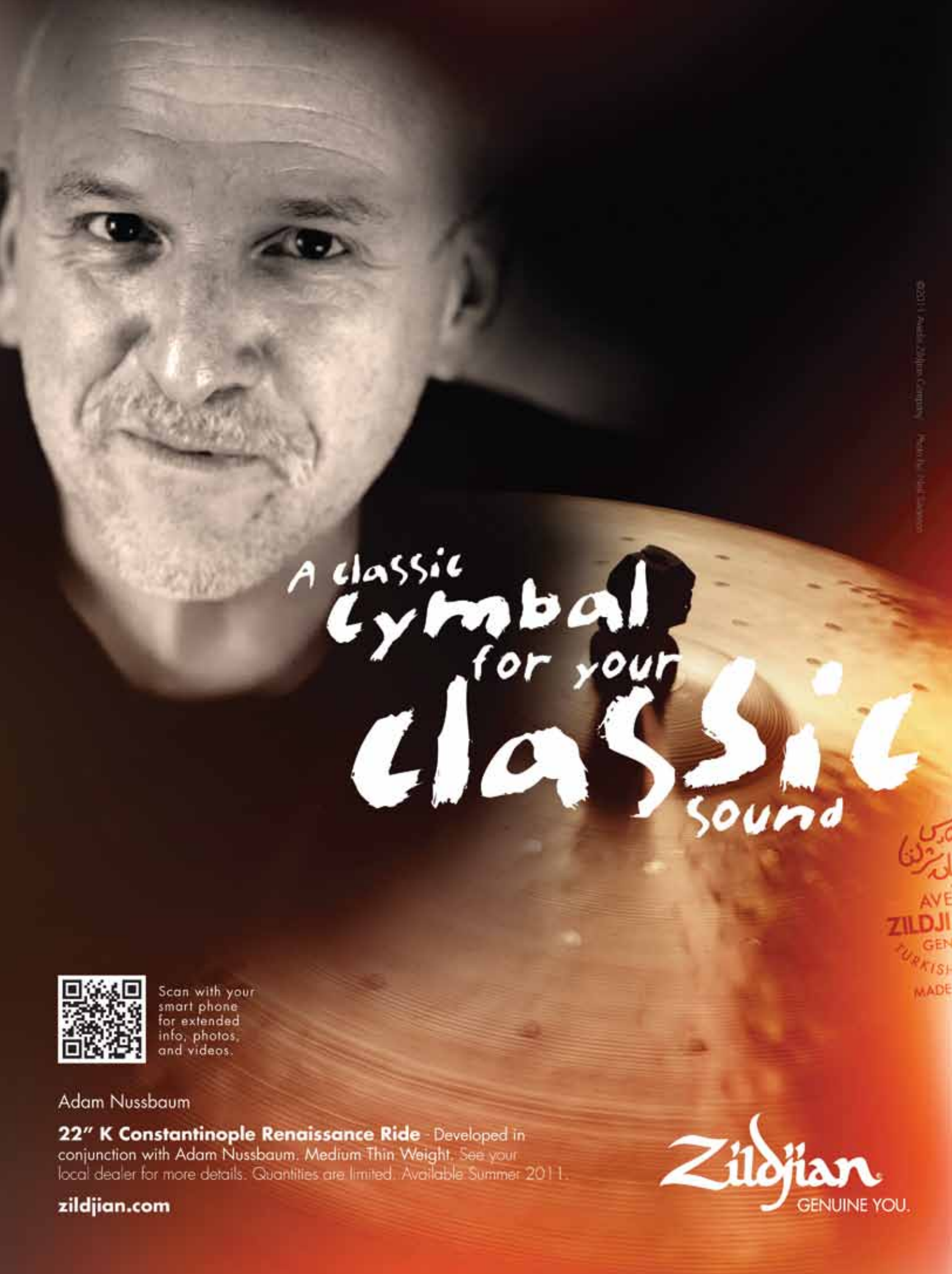
JOE CUNNIFF
CHICAGO

Corrections

- The Tritone Jazz Fantasy Camp "Jazz At Naz" in Rochester, N.Y. (tritonejazz.com), should have listed the faculty as Gene Bertoncini, Clay Jenkins, Ike Sturm, Dariusz Terefenko, Mark Kellogg, Jim Doser, Kristen Shiner McGuire and Rich Thompson. The listing for Tritone's "Cool At The Lake" Fantasy Camp in Baileys Harbor, Wis., did not include Ike Sturm and Fred Sturm; it misidentified Tom Washatka and Rod Blumenau ("International Jazz Camp Guide," March).
- The story on Jen Shyu ("Players," April) misidentified the name of the Stravinsky International Piano Competition and the title of her first disc, *For Now*. Her disc *Jade Tongue* was on Shyu's own Chiuyen label. The photo was by Joaquin Farnos.

DOWNBEAT REGRETS THE ERRORS.

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Beat

Centennial Celebration

Composer Ryan Truesdell Revives Lost Corners of Gil Evans' Songbook

To celebrate the upcoming 100th anniversary of Gil Evans' birth, composer Ryan Truesdell has begun working on a disc full of long-lost Evans compositions. The album will be part of the ongoing Gil Evans Centennial Project, which Truesdell began after gathering together nearly 50 of Evans' compositions and arrangements that had never been recorded. Updates on the project's progress are posted on Truesdell's recently launched website, gilevansproject.com.

Truesdell unearthed the tunes after contacting the composer's family, reaching out to the relatives of Evans' musical associates and conducting extensive research. Many of the works had simply been misplaced over the years, and there was a fair amount of music that Evans' family had not known about.

These pieces form a mini-history of Evans. In Truesdell's cache, there's everything from a 1937 arrangement as well as tunes he worked on for Claude Thornhill and songs he arranged for singers later in his career.

"I started going through the scores on a personal level just to find out what it was about," said Truesdell, who initially intended simply to analyze Evans' writings. "I was interested in finding out what exactly Gil was doing and trying to learn from him. That's when I started realizing that this stuff had never been recorded."

The album won't be recorded until August, and the logistics of the CD are still being ironed out. One big question has been the concept of the record. Truesdell could either compile a retrospective and pick pieces from each time period in Evans' career, or he might simply highlight the greatest pieces and hope they somehow mesh as an album. Whatever path he chooses, one thing's for certain: Only a small fraction of the music will make the cut.

"It's a little overwhelming, to be honest," he said. "I would love to do a five-album set of all this music, but I don't have a million dollars to do it."

None of the pieces have been previously recorded, but some tunes did manage to find their way onto albums, just in different versions. Astrud Gilberto recorded a small ensemble arrangement of "Look To The Rainbow" for a 1966 release, but Truesdell also discovered a big-band arrangement of the song.

"If they are recognizable titles, they're completely different versions," he said. "It will all be brand-new music that hasn't been heard."



Truesdell has been slowly bringing some of the compositions out into the world. He led a concert of mostly Thornhill-era compositions and some tunes Evans wrote for Cannonball Adderley in New York in March with the Eastman Chamber Jazz Ensemble and special guests Phil Woods, Andy Bey and Frank Kimbrough. The band also recreated Evans' *Out Of The Cool* album onstage last April. More events are being planned, including a multi-day CD release party.

The project has so many working parts that it would be a financial nightmare for a record company, Truesdell said. He instead is taking his multifaceted idea to the fans, crowd-sourcing the recording through AristShare.

"This gives me the freedom to do it and lets fans be the ones who say, 'This is artistically interesting, and I want to be a part of this, and that's why I'm going to financially help it,'" Truesdell said.

Truesdell said he feels that this music is for the fans, especially those who don't know much about Evans beyond his work with Miles Davis. Through the recording and concerts, he hopes to create a wider awareness of Evans and his music.

"It's not fair for me to keep this music in a filing cabinet all to myself," he said. "I have to share it."

—Jon Ross



Jazz Stamp: The United States Postal Service has released a new stamp commemorating jazz. Jeffery Taylor, USPS Louisiana District Manager (left); stamp designer Paul Rogers; Nancy Maranovic, executive director, New Orleans Cultural Arts Center; Thurgood Marshall Jr., vice chairman, USPS Board of Governors; and Guy Cottrell, chief postal inspector, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, unveiled the stamp at the New Orleans Contemporary Arts Center on March 26. [Details: usps.gov](http://usps.gov)

Collectors' Corner: Frederick Cohen, owner of New York's Jazz Record Center, has written and published *Blue Note Records: A Guide For Identifying Original Pressings*. The book illustrates how record owners can see if their vintage records from the iconic label are originals. It also includes chapters on promo-only mono issues and release dates for 10-inch and 12-inch LPs from the 1950s and '60s.

[Details: jazzrecordcenter.com](http://jazzrecordcenter.com)

Carroll Celebration: Singer/pianist Barbara Carroll will mark the 65th anniversary of her arrival in New York City and 50-year anniversary of her debut recording with a new disc, *How Long Has This Been Going On?* (Harbinger). She will perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Allen Room on June 8 and at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola on June 21–26.

[Details: barbaracarrolljazz.com](http://barbaracarrolljazz.com)

Sax Debut: Saxophonist Curtis MacDonald has signed to Greenleaf Records and released his debut on the label, *Community Immunity*. He will be touring throughout the United States and Canada this summer.

[Details: greenleafmusic.com](http://greenleafmusic.com)

RIP, Lacy Gibson: Chicago blues singer and guitarist Lacy Gibson died on April 11 of a heart attack. He was 74. With his jazz-inspired lines, Gibson was a valuable sideman to Willie Dixon, Jimmy Reed, Sonny Seals and Billy Boy Arnold. His own records included *Switchy Titchy* (Black Magic) and *Crying For My Baby* (Delmark). He also recorded *Wishing Ring* (Saturn), which his brother-in-law Sun Ra released in 1971.

Chicago Musicians Build On Fred Anderson's Lessons

Saxophonist Fred Anderson didn't just leave a legacy when he died in June 2010. He left behind a club considered by Chicago's finest players as ground zero for free-form innovation, group collaboration and showdowns. But the Velvet Lounge, located in the city's South Loop neighborhood, was shuttered just six months following Anderson's passing, which, for his peers and admirers, became a day of reckoning for Chicago's receding club scene.

"It was a galvanizing institution," said saxophonist Ernest Dawkins. "It was the headquarters for greater music in general on the South Side."

There is movement afoot to pick up where the Velvet left off. Leading the way is the Velvet Birdhouse Coalition, an umbrella group of musicians named after the Velvet, but also the Birdhouse, Anderson's first club, which he opened in the '70s. Affiliated with the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), which Anderson helped found, the group has hosted events in Anderson's honor at L26 Restaurant in the South Loop Hotel, just four blocks from the Velvet, and the DuSable Museum of African American History.

"Right now, the coalition is motivated to keep the music going," said multi-reedist Douglas Ewart. "There aren't many venues for music, especially on the South Side, that are doing both the traditional and experimental music."

The Velvet Birdhouse is still a work in progress, according to its participants. It awaits a



board of directors, bylaws and a permanent partnership with a local club, theater, cafe, bookstore, university—whatever place feels organic to the music and not motivated by commercial concerns. Despite the obvious nod to Anderson, the musicians involved say they are adamant that wherever they call home will build upon the community Anderson fostered.

"With the Velvet Lounge, it was all about making the music strong and keeping it at as high a level as possible and, at the same time, creating a training ground for young people," Ewart explained. "You could experiment there and not encounter any censorship or any kind of ridicule. It's hard to duplicate."

—Mark Guarino

DownBeat Hires New Managing Editor

Bobby Reed, a Chicago-based journalist and editor, has joined the DownBeat staff as managing editor. Reed has a broad range of experience in publishing, and he has served as a freelance music journalist for the Chicago Sun-Times since 1998. Prior to joining DownBeat, Reed penned more than 900 articles for newspapers, magazines and websites.

"Bobby comes to DownBeat with a wealth of writing and editing experience in a wide variety of music and entertainment settings," said Frank Alkyer, DownBeat's publisher. "From our viewpoint, it's a great time to be in publishing, and we look forward to Bobby helping us expand our ability to deliver great music journalism in multiple formats."

Reed has conducted in-person interviews with musicians in dozens of intriguing locations, including the lobby of Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York, the press room of the Staples Center in Los Angeles, aboard an ultramodern tour bus in Nashville, Tenn., and in the backstage area of Antone's in Austin, Texas.



After graduating from the University of Tennessee, Reed earned a master's degree in English from Indiana University. On his personal list of most memorable concerts are shows by Bob Dylan, Georgie Fame, Renée Fleming, Dizzy Gillespie, Lionel Hampton, Kelly Hogan, Keith Jarrett, B.B. King, Wynton Marsalis, Joan Osborne and Stevie Wonder.

—ed.

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Swedish Jazz Celebration Sets The Pace For National Priorities

Whenever talk turns to deficit cutting in Washington, D.C., support for the arts is almost always one of the first things tossed on the chopping block. It's during these moments when Americans who care about culture grow envious of countries that recognize how enriching the arts are for their populations, particularly in Europe, where there remains vigorous support, despite budget reductions in recent years. In March, Sweden displayed a prime example of artistic assistance when it hosted its 10th annual Swedish Jazz Celebration—a model of national artistic pride and an event designed to promote Swedish jazz abroad.

For two consecutive days more than 30 groups performed full sets for an audience consisting of curious locals and industry folks from around the world. Odd Sneeggen of Svensk Music, an initiative of the Society of Swedish Composers, has organized the event since it began in 2001 in Stockholm, where it occurs every other year. For even-numbered years, the event moves around the country to smaller cities, such as Malmö, Gothenburg and this year's host, Luleå, in the northern reaches of the country, close to the Arctic Circle. The program is a co-



operative endeavor that involves Swedish National Public Radio and, until this year, Rikskonserter, the Swedish concert organization that recently shut down. Svensk Musik invites booking agents, fes-

tival organizers, label representatives and journalists from around the globe to experience new trends in Swedish jazz in person.

"The best thing is to have the people here so they can meet and mix with the Swedish artists," Sneeggen said. "We hope that once they have established contact they can continue without our help."

Sneeggen cites the Vancouver International Jazz Festival and the Xerox Rochester International Jazz Festival as early and consistent supporters of Swedish jazz. Both events have programmed the Jonas Kullhammar Quartet and Tonbruket, a new outfit led by former E.S.T. bassist Dan Berglund, this year. He also cites the German imprint ACT Records, which has signed numerous Swedish artists through showcases, including Nils Landgren, Viktoria Tolstoy, Oddjob, E.S.T. and Josefine Cronholm, who performed at this year's event. "It's another great way to export Swedish music," Sneeggen said.

As a performing rights society his organization generates income by securing airplay for Swedish artists, both through commercial recordings and radio broadcasts. Every festival concert is taped and distributed through the European

Broadcasting Union. As with many such showcases, the lineup of this year's event was typically broad—thanks to a Nordic venture called Music on Top, a few Scandinavian artists, including Marilyn Mazur, Nils Berg, Bugge Wesseltuft and Marie Boine, and a collaboration between Dee Dee Bridgewater and the local acclaimed Norrbotten Big Band. Mainstream artists like saxophonist Fredrik Kronkvist and pianist Jacob Karlzon were nicely balanced by the presence of fiery adventurers like The Thing and up-and-comer saxophonist Elin Larsson. The programming reflects a catholic sensibility that has no interest in playing jazz police. Indeed, two of this year's most exciting surprises freely slalomed through post-bop ideas, from the pop accents and sharp arrangements of The Stoner and the Modern Jazz Quartet revisions of a dynamite quintet led by pianist Cecilia Persson.

Another key facet of the annual event is a focus on university bands. This year there were eight college-level groups in competition. It seems certain that some of the young musicians who made noise this year will be back as key figures at the festival's future editions.

DB

Among those joining us for the week are Kurt Elling, John Pizzarelli, Benny Golson, Heath Brothers, Ann Hampton-Callaway, Bill Charlap, Shelly Berg, Wycliffe Gordon, Randy Brecker, Clayton Brothers and many, many more.

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Arhoolie Celebrates Golden Anniversary

Arhoolie Records is celebrating its 50th anniversary with a four-disc collection of Americana recordings. Blues, Cajun, zydeco, Tex-Mex/Tejano, gospel, jazz, country and bluegrass are represented via Bukka White, Lonnie Johnson, Big Mama Thornton and Sonny Simmons on *Hear Me Howling! Blues, Ballads, & Beyond*.

"I started in high school with a tiny disc-cutter," said label founder Chris Strachwitz. "And I started recording stuff off the air. I was totally enamored of the whole recording idea."

Those early recordings took on more meaning when Strachwitz heard Lightnin' Hopkins in 1959 in a Houston beer joint. For Strachwitz, it was essential that most of his recordings take place in natural settings, as opposed to studios. So he and Paul Oliver have taken recording trips through the South beginning in 1960. Strachwitz later turned his attention to locations south of the U.S. border.

"With this Mexican-American and Mexican music there are so many one-of-a-kinds. And when computers came on the scene, we decided to digitize this collection and see if we could get some grants."

Grants have come from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Endowment for the Arts and others. Arhoolie also connected with the Chicano Studies Research Center at the University of California, Los Angeles, to digitize their recordings. A followup to *Hear Me Howling!* will be the four-CD *The Chicano Experience*.

"Of the musicians I really liked, they all had this kind of down-home feel to them," Strachwitz said. "It was something they'd been doing all their lives, and they were just really delighted to find somebody who was interested."

—John Ephland



Chris Strachwitz



Pinetop Perkins

Perkins' Eight Decades of Joyous Keys

Joseph Willie "Pinetop" Perkins, one of the last links to pre-World War II Delta blues, died of natural causes at his home in Austin, Texas, on March 21. The blues and boogie-woogie pianist was 97. Just weeks earlier, he'd been the oldest recipient of a Grammy Award for *Joined At The Hip* (Telarc), co-

featuring harmonica player Willie "Big Eyes" Smith. Starting in the 1980s, Perkins recorded more than 20 feature albums. The native Mississippian, who moved to Chicago in 1950, dominated the Blues Foundation's "Piano Player of the Year" category so many years that, starting in 2003, the award was named after him.

In the early decades of his career, Perkins pounded the ivories with Earl Hooker, Sonny Boy Williamson II and B.B. King. He replaced Otis Spann in the high-profile Muddy Waters Band in 1969. He joined the Legendary Blues Band in 1980. "Pinetop played blues piano with swing, soul, sex and fun, and sounded like nobody but himself," said Waters' guitarist Bob Margolin.

Pianist Mitch Woods, acknowledging Perkins' notorious appetites, said he once asked him his secret of longevity. "Pinetop replied simply, 'I likes it here.'"

—Frank-John Hadley

contact



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Sheila Jordan Sings Uplifting Life Story in Los Angeles

Sheila Jordan made an infrequent visit to Southern California on March 11 and 12. At two sets a night, the vocal jazz pioneer offered a four-part musical autobiography, weaving her personal history in with the history of the music. Rather than self-aggrandize, Jordan graciously paid homage to the greats.

Singer and teacher Ellen Johnson produced the weekend at Vitello's, an Italian restaurant with a jazz policy. For the past couple of years, she has been collaborating with Jordan on a memoir. Johnson delivered introductions and read passages that set up songs illuminating Jordan's glorious musical—though often rocky—personal life. The format of Johnson as amanuensis between Jordan's songs evoked Billie Holiday's 1956 Carnegie Hall concert for the release of her *Lady Sings The Blues* book.

Jordan can claim being an early bebop vocal interpreter, a cherished singer of Charlie Parker, Lennie Tristano's celebrated vocal student, an innovator of the voice-and-bass format (with Charles Mingus), the first vocalist to record her own album for Blue Note (*Portrait Of Sheila*, in 1962) and a precursor to free-jazz singing.

Throughout her career, Jordan has had a modest but expressive voice. Her chest tones are still husky and the middle notes are shimmering quicksilver. But when she jumped an octave to her falsetto, the notes were thick and their intonation sure. Jordan's second chorus of "It's You Or No One" indulged her one-of-a-kind scat singing. She always scats to the changes and in a linear way. Her Cherokee background got a nod with a stream of "hey-ah-mah-ho-ah-mah..." concluding with an ascendant "whooh!" The effect was quietly thrilling.



One of Los Angeles' best working trios accompanied Jordan: pianist Alan Pasqua, bassist Darek Oles and drummer Peter Erskine. Whether it was lesser-known bebop anthems, blues, ballads or Jordan's own near-free-form pieces, the four functioned as a unit with a singing focal point. Pasqua's lyrical invention and surprises were a continual delight. He held the center as Jordan spontaneously reharmonized "My Funny Valentine." She introduced "It's You" as a song she first heard at Tristano's studio, and Pasqua's solo channeled Tristano in a black-key single-note stretch. Oles replicated her phrasing in their exchange on "The Very Thought Of You" with bass lines that were lyrical and swinging. Erskine was a model of support and shading.

Jordan's art is a subtle one. On "Bird Alone" she played with vibrato. Elsewhere she demon-

strated how to vary the dynamics within one note. The technique was always an adjunct to the emotional content that she invested in the songs.

Parker's example and endorsement have been central to Jordan's life and work. She began her arrangement of his "Quasimodo" with an interpretation of her former husband Duke Jordan's original piano introduction as an arch inside reference and personal homage. Her own lyrics to Parker's solo may exalt Bird, yet the "Embraceable You" changes that are the tune's bedrock can still be discerned. A wild card tune—"Where You At?"—joyously reinforced the evening's hipness quotient, which was already nearly off the chart.

This portrait of Jordan was one of a gentle woman with an indomitable spirit whose faith in the music gave her life direction and ultimately saved it. —Kirk Silsbee

Thunderous, Generous Spirits Pervade John Hollenbeck Large Ensemble

When drummer-composer John Hollenbeck says "large," he means something along the lines of "magnanimous." Everything about the ensemble he brought to New York's Jazz Standard on March 1 for the first stop on its U.S. mini-tour was generous. The size (19 pieces plus conductor) was the given, but other aspects were more subtle, including Hollenbeck's skillful use of singer Theo Bleckmann. The role of a vocalist in a big band has been well defined since the days when Ella Fitzgerald was fronting Chick Webb's orchestra and Herb Jeffries was featured with Duke Ellington, yet Hollenbeck casts

Bleckmann's voice as focal point and as instrument, foreground and ensemble player. As the band launched into the opener, "Guarana," the singer's tenor was an added color within the soaring passages and the punchy rhythmic cycle that became the melody, in step with brass against the volley of piano, vibraphone and Hollenbeck's hand-drumming on the traps. Later in the set, Bleckmann would inject *khoomei*—known in the West as Asian throat-singing—techniques into the mix.

If it all sounds epic, that was precisely the objective. Each piece introduced novel twists



that pushed it beyond the 10-minute mark. Hollenbeck and the rest of the rhythm section (bassist Kermit Driscoll, pianist Matt Mitchell and vibraphonist Patricia Franceschi) supplied plenty of propulsion, but the charts on pieces like “The Blessing” and “The Music Of Life” swelled with classical flourishes that made the music feel gauzy and weightless rather than traditionally muscular.

One after another, however, Hollenbeck’s soloists crashed through the gossamer facade. Trombonist Jacob Garchik sliced across the shifting rhythms of the opener, while saxophon-

ist Tony Malaby answered the call repeatedly, on soprano for “The Blessing” and as one of three tenors (with Jeremy Viner and Dan Willis) on “Perseverance,” the evening’s most thunderous groove exercise. As perhaps a cooldown from tom-toms that veered into rock territory before turning martial, what followed was another stellar example of Hollenbeck’s largesse: He invited up singer Kate McGarry to duet with Bleckmann on an ethereal arrangement of “Wichita Lineman.” Astonishingly, this performance featured the evening’s most traditional use of vocals.

—K. Leander Williams

Philadelphia Shouts Out Its Love For Odean Pope At Star-Studded Tribute Concert

Thanks to finally coming to terms with the condition that has plagued him for more than three decades, Odean Pope doesn’t have to suffer as he once did from the “extreme highs and extreme lows” that he describes as characterizing his bipolar disorder. The medication and treatment he is now under made the naturally extreme high of this benefit concert/tribute to the Philly saxophone legend all the sweeter.

One of those peaks came when the guest of honor took the stage at the Philadelphia Clef Club of Jazz and Performing Arts on March 21 with his Saxophone Choir, leading off with a particularly heartfelt solo on the ensemble’s usual opener, “Cis,” a tribute to his wife.

The concert was organized to raise funds for Pope’s medical bills and to raise awareness for bipolar disorder, which Pope made sure to stress was “nothing to be ashamed of.” The evening began in the fourth-floor recital space with a fierce set by saxophonist Bobby Zankel’s quartet. The first-time assemblage attacked Zankel’s knotty compositions with vigor, raising hopes that they will continue as a unit.

After a short set by a Clef Club Youth Jazz Ensemble, poet Sonia Sanchez paid homage to the honoree on the main stage, echoing his name in a series of chirrup and yelps as bassist Warren Oree bowed furiously. Hidden nearly offstage, Kenny Barron led a trio with bassist Reggie Workman and drummer Warren Smith through a brisk, Thelonious Monk-heavy set.

To introduce Pope, longtime friend and jazz booster Bill Cosby made light of the evening’s theme by observing, “Musicians do strange things.” To wit, he brought on saxophonist Tony Williams to engage in some scatting schtick.

Following a speech, Pope performed a wrenching solo improvisation before lead-



ing the Saxophone Choir, ceding his chair to guest Walter Blanding for half the set. Blanding brought a bluesier feel than is typical with Pope’s more muscular playing to the ensemble’s take on “Central Park West.” Blanding re-emerged to perform music from Pope’s 2010 album *Odean’s List*. Trumpeter Carlos Abadie’s ebullience and Blanding’s broad-shouldered but agile soloing were highlights.

The evening ended with performances by two progressive-leaning electric bassists. First, Jamaaladeen Tacuma’s trio with Zankel and drum prodigy Justin Faulkner played a pile-driving set, which Faulkner swept up so forcefully that it looked as if he might pound the drums into dust. Zankel attacked the Ornette Coleman-inflected set with such fire-breathing tenacity that his earlier set looked positively demure by comparison.

Bassist Gerald Veasley, who received one of his earliest performing opportunities with Pope, stepped out of the smooth realm where he mostly resides these days for a more fusion-inspired trio with Craig McIver and saxophonist Willie Williams. While Veasley played clean, virtuosic gymnastics in a Stanley Clarke vein, Williams blew like a loft-scene veteran, making for an intriguing tension to close out the night.

—Shaun Brady



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T.K. Blue ▶ *Bird In Flight*

In the early days of Charlie Parker's career, solos were necessarily short, due to pre-LP audio capacity. Despite the technological innovations that have vastly expanded the length of recordings, saxophonist/flutist T.K. Blue still keeps his solos short. He believes in the concision and integrity of the message, and that it should originate from a place of positivity and humility.

"Life is not always peaches and cream," says Blue, "but I strive to bring something to a situation, add something to promote a positive environment."

Randy Weston, Dizzy Gillespie, James Moody and singer Joe Lee Wilson are among those whose examples have bolstered Blue's upbeat energy over the years. He also received a lesson in brevity from Eddie Jefferson, a pioneer of Parker-derived vocalese.

"I sat in with Eddie at the Tin Palace in Greenwich Village," Blue recalls. "He offered me one chorus, but the crowd was behind me and I kept playing. When I finished, he slapped me upside my head and said, 'Kid, can't you count?' It was a lesson to listen to your elders."

Blue doesn't draw the obvious comparison between this incident and the time Jo Jones hurled his cymbal at Parker during a jam session. He comments, "Bird was young then, but by the time I met Eddie, I was 22 and had some experience on the New York scene."

Bronx-born but raised on Long Island, where he teaches at Long Island University, T.K. Blue was formerly known by his original name, Eugene Rhynie. He caught an early break when exiled South African multi-instrumentalist Ndikho Xaba introduced him to Abdullah Ibrahim, then called Dollar Brand. Blue's first record date was on Ibrahim's *The Journey* (1977) alongside Don Cherry, Hamiet Bluiett and Carlos Ward. The purity and openness in his conception proved a natural fit for the distilled spirituality of Ibrahim's music.

Blue took further forays into the music of Africa through tours with Weston and served as musical director (under a new African name, Talib Kibwe) on Weston's 1991 album *Spirits Of Our Ancestors*. This experience, fused with his Trinidadian/Jamaican ancestry and consequent exposure to calypso, sealed in Blue's outlook the necessity for community and groove. (The name Blue, incidentally, stems from a high school nickname derived from his default dress code of blue jeans; but it also relates to the blues elements in Parker's music.)

For his interpretations of eight Parker tunes on *Latin Bird*, Blue's ninth solo album and his first for the Motéma label, he collaborated with



pianist Theo Hill, percussionist Roland Guerrero and drummer Willie Martinez (who also plays timbales), as well as special guests Lewis Nash and Steve Turre.

Latin Bird opens the bebop pores of Parker's lesser-known compositions (including "Si Si" and "Visa"), allowing for more relaxed blowing. Rather than toboggan through the changes of "Chi Chi," with its chromatic slips, Blue modulates up a half-step after the head, with Turre's piping shells and his own lithe flute solo offset by a *montuno* vamp.

After specializing in flute, Blue fell for the soprano sax after hearing John Coltrane's version of "My Favorite Things." It was Jimmy Heath, instructing him at the Jazzmobile in New York, who insisted that he come to grips with alto and tenor if we wanted to broaden his employability—even showing him a photograph of Coltrane gazing in amazement at a soloing Parker. Immediately after hearing Parker's "Red Cross" and "Shaw 'Nuff," Blue purchased a vintage Selmer Super Sax "Cigar Cutter" alto.

Before returning to the United States in the '90s, Blue spent most of the '80s living in Paris. He credits that time with expanding his perspective.

"Lines of demarcation are more rigid in the

States, whereas in France, if someone liked my sound, I'd get called for funk, Latin or Senegalese music gigs."

"Blue Bird" on the new album sounds as if it were recorded on a seashore at sunset, shifting effortlessly from undulations buoyed by bass and lovely percussion colorations, to darting fragments that echo Parker's original solo, to deep bluesy swing. There is a strong center and calm; though the arrangements here are innovative, there's no sense of showing off. "Round Midnight" is given a reverently restrained reading, while "Donna Lee" gets a samba treatment.

The late trombonist Benny Powell, who worked with Blue in Weston's quintet for a quarter-century, is commemorated with a solo alto sax tribute before the album closes with the fanfare send-off of an Afro-Cuban infused "Buzzy."

Once again Blue doesn't outstay his welcome. "Frank Wess and I discussed that 50/50 moment at the apex of a solo, when you feel good but it's at the point when you have conveyed your message. Applause may follow a long solo, but the audience may secretly be happy it's over. When you reach that threshold, feel better about yourself and don't play. Get people to tap their feet and leave feeling better than when they arrived, wanting more." —Michael Jackson

Roberta Piket ▶ *Beyond The Trio*

Roberta Piket knows the trio format well. Her latest album, *Sides, Colors*, is a trio project, at least most of the time. So why did this gifted keyboardist and arranger take five years to release a followup to 2006's *Love And Beauty*?

The answer lies in what makes the new release not strictly a trio album. Amidst a few covers and an array of new material written by Piket and her longtime drummer and personal partner, Billy Mintz, moments of unexpected elaboration pop up in the form of a few wind or string players. They appear almost like a Greek chorus commentary, mirroring the harmony, changing the color of the background behind a solo, or standing alone as a brief but intriguing episode.

Because the New York-based artist had never really arranged for strings or wind quartets, it was important to finesse her skills in that craft. "I'd gotten as far as I could with trios," Piket says. "I've written a bunch of jazz tunes—waltzes, burners, free tunes. But I wanted to extend my voice through adding these arrangements."

Her work led her toward a more personal way of writing than to just cook up charts as au-

dio backdrops. Instead, she drops these moments into her treatment of "Laurie," which has a piano intro she reharmonized with a new perspective on the Bill Evans concept. And she presents her composition "Empty House" as a slow-motion call-and-response, with the trio and the horn players making alternate statements based on a shadowy two-chord motif.

"I wanted to add some colors, textures and timbres to what I'm doing, but I didn't want to lose the intimacy and the interaction that the trio has," she explains. "Most of the arrangements that have horns started out as trio tunes."

This inspired Piket to record all of those augmented tracks live in the studio. "You're hearing them as being an extension of us, but we're also reacting to and playing around their commentary. You have to interact; otherwise, the music is going to sound mechanical or disjointed."

Several tracks vary this format, with the trio playing on its own or with Piket switching to organ. She even sings on Rodgers and Hammerstein's "If I Loved You," but that one also is sweetened by her now distinctive technique of writing for a



chamber setting—which, for all else that merits recognition on *Sides, Colors*, is the most significant distinction between this project and the rest of her catalog.

"I like that word 'technique' because it makes it sound like I know what I'm doing," Piket says, laughing. "I wasn't thinking in terms of technique. It's all about keeping the focus on the trio and adding another dimension to that."

—Robert L. Doerschuk



TEL-32760-02 TELARC

Eric Bibb: Troubadour Live, captures one of those powerful live performances in an intimate but emotionally charged setting. Recorded in December 2010 just outside of Stockholm, it features Swedish guitarist Staffan Astner and gospel trio Psalm4. It features new songs, along with three songs from Booker's Guitar (#1 Billboard Blues Album, Blues Award nominee, and staple of many 'Best Of 2010' lists).



CJA-32761-02

Light My Fire – wields this universal sound to explore the various corners of the human heart – from romance and passion to the shared joy of being alive and embracing everyone into the dance of life. Along with four compositions written or co-written by Elias herself, the album also includes covers of familiar works by songwriters as diverse as Jim Morrison and the Doors, pop icon Stevie Wonder and jazz saxophonist Paul Desmond. Elias weaves it all together into a cohesive whole by injecting each of the twelve songs with distinctly Brazilian grooves that alternate effortlessly between the fiery and passionate to the cool and sophisticated.



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Jonathan Kreisberg ▶ *Guilt-Free Groover*

Like many musicians, Jonathan Kreisberg works the highways and byways of America and the world, looking for his next gig. But this New York guitarist sees opportunity where others see trouble.

"This is an exciting time," Kreisberg says from his Brooklyn apartment. "All the sugar-coated pop and mass-produced hip-hop is actually helping jazz. People were being hypnotized, but now they want to hear something creative, or a musician really expressing themselves on an intense level right in front of them. That's jazz. That's the guys I play with, and that's what we're doing. People aren't getting that from mass media—they're getting it live and from college radio. I'm getting a really young audience now, and DJs [who spin jazz] tell me the same thing."

Bold as the music on his latest independent release, *Shadowless*, Kreisberg is a poster child for positive jazz thinking. The CD marks that moment where a musician who has spent years studying others finally comes into his own. Kreisberg's blazing lines, based in hard-bop and the fluid profundity of Allan Holdsworth, are matched by crystalline compositions that clear the air and clear one's head—a blast of pure musical logic.

Kreisberg embraces tradition in his basic quintet format (Will Vinson, saxophone; Henry Hey, piano; Matt Penman, bass; Mark Ferber, drums). The structures of his compositions aren't particularly radical, but his angular, streamlined jazz is compelling. Kreisberg works regularly with organist Dr. Lonnie Smith's group, but he also treads far from traditional terrain.

"There was a point when I was listening to

[only] bebop, 1960s jazz and Allan Holdsworth," he recalls. "Allan is the one guy who played fusion who transcended the genre with his harmonic, melodic and virtuosic abilities. Holdsworth's coming out of [John] Coltrane and [Nicolas] Slonimsky and pathways of hearing different shapes, stretching the harmony. You can tell that he listened to Charlie Christian and other jazz musicians, too, but through his lens it became something different. And that's hopefully what is starting to happen for me. Even though I am more out of the tradition—I like to swing—I love the idea that you can take from the masters and it can become something different."

The songs of *Shadowless* are so intoxicating that it's easy to miss the odd-metered rhythms that support much of the melodic action. "Twenty One" blasts the beat in 21/8; the slow 9/4 groove of "Zembékiko" is based in a Greek folk dance; drum and bass rhythms propel "Stir The Stars"; and "Nice Work If You Can Get It" veers between 5/4 bars and 5/4 bars divided by half.

"A lot of the old-school guys are amazing musicians," Kreisberg asserts, "but they don't play odd meters beyond the heads. To us, it's a big part of the future. It's super important to play in four and three and groove, but to not apply that to more odd times is funny. Brubeck did it in the '50s; Joe Henderson had some grooves in five and seven. It's part of exploring; it breaks up your lines in interesting ways. The young guys are looking for ways to challenge how you hear lines, and playing in odd times [beyond the head] is a simple way to do that. Your line won't resolve the same way. That's exciting for me."

—Ken Micallef

Shauli Einav ▶ All About The Beauty

Checking out Shauli Einav's debut recording, *Opus One* (Plus Lion Music), one wonders how this gifted saxophonist might fit into the current wave of talented, young Israeli musicians on today's jazz scene. Think Avishai Cohen, Omer Avital and Anat Cohen for starters.

"I used to dance in an Israeli folk dance group," Einav recalls, thinking about growing up in Israel. "My father was their accordionist and my older sister also danced there." As if to make a connection with *Opus One*, he adds, "I think that Israeli folk music has influenced my compositions."

To anyone taking a Blindfold Test on any of the nine pieces composed and arranged by the leader, *Opus One* would come across as a smartly played, swinging and evocative jazz album. Even with titles like "Hayu Leilot," "Shavuot" and "Jerusalem Theme," there's no obvious way to hear this music other than as something straight out of the Big Apple.

Some of that might be because Einav relocated to the States after he served in the Israeli army and earned his bachelor's degree from the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. He then received a master's degree from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. From there it was on to New York City in 2008, where he has made a name for himself. Four reasons why the 29-year-old Einav garners attention in a crowded field are his mentors: Walt Weiskopf, Dave Liebman, Harold Danko and the late Arnie Lawrence. A saxophonist and top-flight educator, Lawrence moved to Israel in 1997 and founded the International Center for Creative Music in Jerusalem. As a common denominator among many of his peers, Einav says, "Arnie influenced almost every new Israeli jazz musician that has come to New York since the '90s."

Asked about the players who join him for *Opus One*, Einav is effusive about everyone on board. "In each one of these musicians I see integrity, honesty and kindness," he says. "When the people are like that, in addition to being superb musicians, you cannot go wrong."

Speaking more specifically, Einav notes, "I've known Shai Maestro since we were very young, and it has been amazing for me to see how well he's done in his career, taking the piano chair with the Avishai Cohen Trio for the last five years. Joseph Lepore, in addition to being one of the busiest bassists in town, was one of the most welcoming people that I've met. Johnathan Blake is one of my favorite drummers, and he's usually playing with other great Israeli musicians, such as Omer and Avishai. After a referral from a friend, I met [trombonist] Andy Hunter a



few weeks before the recording. I was not disappointed, to say the least."

The music on *Opus One* reflects the same friendly vibe that Einav describes when speaking of his bandmates. From the bop-oriented "Kavana" to more straightforward swing with "The Damelin" to ballads like "New Era Ballad" and "Naama," the cohesion of the tight rhythm section coupled with the Einav/Hunter front line sets the stage for some very intriguing solos, especially from the leader, whose maturity and style indicate a great amount of heart and soul. That spirit is also reflected in the arrangements and compositions, which combine sophistication with memorable melodies.

When Einav refers to "delivering a message to the world," he's mainly talking about the lessons he learned from Lawrence. "*Opus One*, for me," Einav explains, "is like a book of short stories. Each tune has its own story but at the same time they connect to each other. I tried taking the listener on a trip into my own life. I called it *Opus One* because it is a compilation of works collected through my last two years since coming to New York City."

Even if one weren't aware of Einav's background, the quality of his playing and writing make him a noteworthy young talent, regardless of how his music might get classified. "Categorizing is really hard and sometimes contradicts the music," Einav notes. "So I'd just say that it's all music. And like my mentor Arnie Lawrence liked to say, 'It's all about the beauty.' At the same time, I understand that by knowing the backstory, one can really connect more to the artist, which means a great deal to me."

—John Ephland

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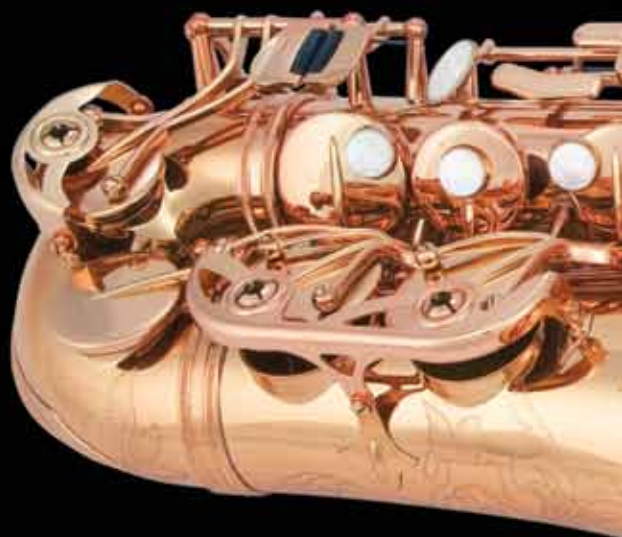
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GROWING UP Monk

**T.S. Monk Jr.
on his father,
his jazz family
and the Monk
Institute at 25**

As told to Frank Alkyer
Photos by Michael Weintrob

T.S. Monk at home

What's it like to grow up the child of a famous father, the son of jazz royalty? What's it like to share the name Thelonious Sphere Monk?

With the 25th anniversary of the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz approaching, DownBeat invited T.S. Monk Jr., a fine drummer in his own right, namesake of the Hall of Fame pianist and chairman of the board of trustees of the Monk Institute, to fly out to Chicago for a live interview. In front of more than 250 music students and educators at the Midwest Band Clinic last December, Monk Jr. revealed, "Thelonious is such a mystery to some, a mystery to so many people. But many of you may not know, he was a real family man."



It's a side of the playful genius of jazz that adds to his legacy. Nearly 30 years since his death, Monk's influence grows almost exponentially. His music has been rediscovered, and reinterpreted, by generation after generation of jazz artists with dozens of Monk tributes coming out in the last two years alone (see a few below). The Monk Institute has blossomed behind the famous name, helping discover as many top-level artists as any record company in the business—including Marcus Roberts, Joshua Redman, Jane Monheit and many others.

With Washington, D.C., as its home base, the Monk Institute has also become a de facto international lobbying firm for jazz, successfully reaching out to both sides of the political aisle, and a go-to resource for the White House. Among its board and supporters is an A-list of stars like the institute's chairman, Herbie Hancock, as well as Bill Cosby, Billy Dee Williams, Wayne Shorter, Clint Eastwood, Aretha Franklin, Stevie Wonder and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, to name a few.

All of this has been born from a most unlikely source, one of the most iconoclastic, quirky figures in jazz history—the man T.S. calls “Daddy.” The younger Monk's family memories offer a rare glimpse into Monk's legacy and genius. This interview is presented solely in T.S.'s words. They are detailed, loving and insightful.

I AM MYSTIFIED at how Thelonious was able to mentor Miles [Davis] and mentor John Coltrane and mentor Bud Powell and a whole host of other lesser-known musicians, and run the jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse for eight hours, and run all over the world...and I think of him as Daddy absolutely first. He was always there to be Daddy. He was always home. He liked home. He liked the neighborhood.

A NEWS REPORT came on the television, and it was about Elvis Presley's chauffeur, who wrote, sort of, the first inside, tell-all about the celebrity. My sister and I were laying at the foot of the bed. My mother and father were at the top of the bed, and we watched this whole thing about Elvis' chauffeur. And then Thelonious turns to Nellie and he said, “You'd never pull no dirty shit like that on me?” [laughs]

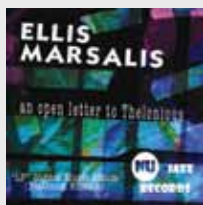
YOU HAD THESE GUYS coming through the door. For instance, I distinctly remember Sonny Rollins coming through the door. He had a Mohawk hairdo. Already, that was wild. But then he had his tenor saxophone in one hand, and he had like a 35-pound dumbbell in the other hand. And of course, this was because the old tenor saxophone cases were these big heavy boxes, and he felt like it was jammin' him up by carrying it, so he had to balance himself out by carrying that 35-pound weight. But I have to tell you, at 6 or 7 years old, this guy coming through the door with these weights in his hand and a Mohawk hairdo was...very strange.

AND THEN YOU'VE GOT MILES DAVIS coming through the door. It's funny because everybody thinks of Miles as this incredibly arrogant guy, telling everybody to kiss his butt all the time. I have to tell you, Miles used to come to the door, and he was a mouse.

Monk Endures

THE MUSIC OF THELONIOUS MONK

is as popular with today's jazz musicians as it was during his lifetime, perhaps more so. Pianists such as Jason Moran and Vijay Iyer reinterpreted Monk tunes on recent records, and a host of other full-blown, album-length tributes have been issued this year. Add to that a continuing reissue craze of Monk's recorded work, and his music is seemingly all over the jazz scene. Here are a few examples.



An Open Letter To Thelonious

Ellis Marsalis

NU JAZZ ENTERTAINMENT

Billed as the first iTunes Jazz LP, this digital LP offers 11 Monk tracks as played by the newly crowned NEA Jazz Master as well as a wealth of bonus videos, songs, liner notes, photos and etymology. It comes in five formats. If the music alone doesn't get you, the bonus features will.



Friday The 13th, The Micros Play Monk

The Microscopic Septet

CUNEIFORM RECORDS

The Micros deliver a dozen Monk tunes, including “Brilliant Corners,” “Teo,” “Pannonica” and “Misterioso.” The recording highlights one of jazz's tightest units as well as the arranging chops of Phillip Johnston, Joel Forrester and Bob Montalto.

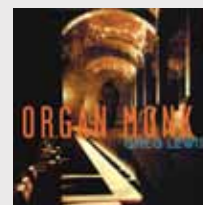


The Dancing Monk

Eric Reed

SAVANT

Pianist Eric Reed chooses the trio setting—with bassist Ben Wolfe and drummer McClellay Hunter—to offer a breathy, upbeat take on Monk's music. “Ask Me Now,” “Ruby, My Dear” and “Blue Monk” serve as pick hits, and Reed's composition “The Dancing Monk” beautifully mixes Monkish riffs with Reed's own style.



Organ Monk

Greg Lewis

SELF-RELEASED

New York-based organist Greg Lewis reinterprets 15 classic Monk tunes, from “Criss Cross,” “Boo's Birthday” and “Locomotion” to “Think Of One,” “Work” and “Inspection.” It's Monk getting the classic organ-trio treatment with Lewis, guitarist Ron Jackson and drum goddess Cindy Blackman.



REISSUED MONK Monk's Music Thelonious Monk

CONCORD

Recorded in 1957 for Riverside Records, Concord has released this classic Monk album as part of its Original Jazz Classics Remasters Series. Featuring John Coltrane, Coleman Hawkins, Gigi Gryce, Art Blakey, Wilbur Ware and Ray Copeland, one of Monk's most-revered groups gets a sonic update.



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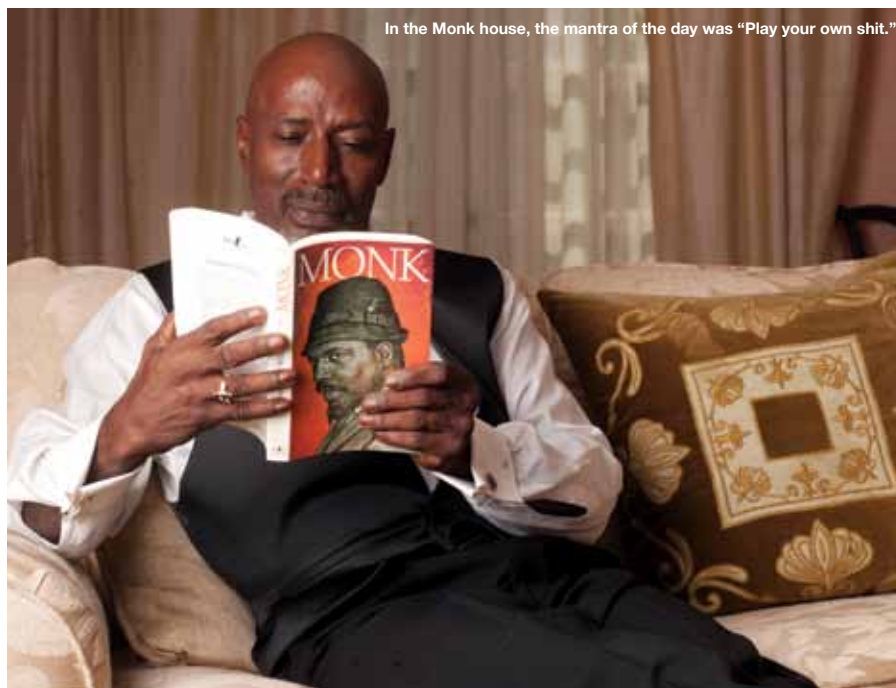
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He used to knock on the door, and I was the official door-answerer. I would go to the door and open the door, and he would say, "Could you tell Monk that Miles is here?" Miles would come in and sit down at the piano. Thelonious would be in the bedroom laying down with his hand over his head. Now, I knew he wasn't sleeping because I told him Miles is at the door, and Thelonious told me to let him in. But Thelonious might lay there for an hour, an hour-and-a-half. And Mr. Arrogance himself, Miles Davis, would sit at that piano like a student, like a child, and wait and wait until Monk would get up and come outside.

IN MY HOUSEHOLD, and in the back rooms of the clubs where I was privileged to hang out, and in the band rooms, whether it was JVC or the Newport Jazz Festival, the mantra in the air was "Play your own stuff." It actually wasn't "Play your own stuff"—everybody's grown here—it was "Play your own shit." I heard it come out of Sonny Rollins' mouth, Miles Davis' mouth, John Coltrane's mouth, Thelonious Monk's mouth, Art Blakey's mouth, Max Roach's mouth, Roy Haynes' mouth, Dexter Gordon's, too. It goes on and on. For everybody who came through the house, that was the mantra of the day.

THELONIOUS TOOK ME EVERYWHERE. I'm a photography buff to this day. How did I become a photography buff? I went to the air-



In the Monk house, the mantra of the day was "Play your own shit."

port one day. Thelonious and Dizzy got off a plane. This was in the day when if you said something was made in Japan, people said, "Oh, my God." It was the way people think of Chinese goods today.

So what happened was the Japanese came up

with a very, very good marketing philosophy. What they would do is when you had all these jazz musicians come in, when you got off the plane in Tokyo, they'd put a Seiko watch on your wrist. They'd put a Sony miniature TV in your hand. And they'd hang a Nikon camera around

 The album cover features a painting of four musicians in a room. The title 'the new gary burton quartet' is written in a handwritten style at the top, and 'common ground' is written below it. The background is a dark, textured surface with a large, stylized blue figure in the bottom right corner.

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your neck. So, I go to the airport and here comes Thelonious and Dizzy and these cats. And Dizzy had this Nikon camera—this was a \$1,000 camera in 1962–'63. Dizzy looked at me. I'm saying, "Hi, Dad. Hi, Dizzy." Hi to everybody. He looks at me and says, "Monk, the kid like cameras?" He just took it off his neck and put it around my neck—a \$1,000 camera. And I've been into photography ever since.

I WAS ALLOWED to run around like a little maniac and be a kid. I remember one night, I don't even know where we were, but Art was there and Max was there and Sonny and a whole lot of cats. I think they might have come down to hear Thelonious. And I'm running around the room doing my little thing. And I remember Thelonious saying, "Hey, Coltrane." And Coltrane said, "What, Monk?" And Thelonious said, "You see? That's my son there. You know he's automatically hip." [laughs] Now, myself, I was embarrassed. I didn't know what this was about. First of all, how am I automatically hip?

WHAT I REALIZED years later was the major self-esteem building that he was doing on me. I didn't know it at the time because it seemed so off-the-wall. But he was telling me, "You are my son. And I'm very hip. And you are automatically hip because you are my son. And John Coltrane, dig him."

DESPITE WHAT YOU MIGHT HAVE READ about his aloofness, Thelonious was probably the most accessible of all the giants in jazz that we have ever had. Thelonious insisted on our address and telephone number being in the phone book his entire life. He didn't want no unlisted number. Of course he had me and my sister and my mother to answer the phone for him. So, he never had to deal with the telephone himself. But he was very, very regular in a lot of ways.

ONE OF THE REASONS that I believe I was able to garner support during the first years for the Monk Institute was that I had an actual personal relationship with those guys—with Clark Terry, with Jimmy Heath, with Max Roach, with Billy Taylor. I knew them personally, so I was

able to go to them personally and say, "Hey, I'm going to start this organization called the Monk Institute of Jazz. Would you help me out?" I don't think if Thelonious didn't have me on his knee, hanging around all the time, I would have been able to do it, or it wouldn't have been as easy, because I wouldn't have those personal relationships. You know what was amazing? They all bought my father's rap. I was automatically hip. [laughs] So, when I went to them, there was no resistance at all. They all said, "This is Monk's son. He's automatically hip. We're ready to get down. We're ready to go." It made it a lot of fun.

AT 15, I WAS GETTING home from school, and I just broke down. I said, "Dad, I think I want to play the drums. I think I really want to play the drums." And he said, "Oh, really?" And this is no lie. It was one of the few times I actually saw my father pick up the phone and call somebody. He said, "Art, look, Toot needs some drums." Like three days later, I had a set of drums from Art Blakey. He put the phone down from Art. He picked up the phone again. And he dialed a number. He said, "Max Roach." He always called him "Max Roach." He never called him "Max." He said, "Max Roach, you are the



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The Monk Institute @ 25

HISTORY HAS A WAY OF CREEPING UP UNEXPECTEDLY. For a quick snapshot of the Thelonious Monk Institute's progress during the past quarter-century, one just has to visit its Washington, D.C., headquarters and study the grand-sized photographs gracing its walls. Images of Joshua Redman sporting a high-top fade haircut, as well as a youthful Christian McBride, make the 1990s suddenly seem all the more distant. More sobering are the images of Joe Henderson, Shirley Horn, Joe Williams, Betty Carter and Abbey Lincoln—musicians who have passed. While these images cannot depict the full story of the Monk Institute, they hint at its timeline and illustrate how it attracted support from major jazz artists and political figures.

To celebrate its silver anniversary, the institute will return the spotlight to its original instrument—the piano—for its acclaimed International Jazz Competition on September 11–12 at the Kennedy Center and the Smithsonian's Baird Auditorium. All previous winners—except Teri Thornton, who died in 2000—have been invited to perform at the gala event. Also performing will be many graduates from the institute's college and high school programs. "Many people around the world associate us solely with the competition, but there are so many programs beyond the competition," says Tom Carter, president and co-founder of the Monk Institute. "So I hope this will be an opportunity to expose the general public and many jazz supporters to some of the people who started working with the institute very early on."

With regard to its educational program, Carter says that the celebration of the 25-year milestone has already begun. It started in February, during Black History Month, with its ongoing program "Jazz Across America" (sponsored by Northrop Grumman Corporation), which has enlisted jazz artists such as Bobby Watson, Lisa Henry and Otis Brown III, along with rapper MC Supernatural and blues artist Chris Thomas King. The musicians visit public schools across the nation, teaching students about jazz's origins and illustrating how jazz and the blues influenced and continue to interact with hip-hop. The Monk Institute's "Peer to Peer" program—which encourages some of its top students to teach at performing arts high schools—is also in full swing. In a partnership with UNESCO, the Monk Institute will send a few college students with trumpeter Dave Douglas to Matera, Italy. All of these ongoing activities coincide with the institute's yearlong birthday party.

"I read somewhere that the Monk Institute has the most innovative jazz education program, but when it comes down to it, we have the most traditional education program," says professor J.B. Dyas, vice president of education and curriculum development. Dyas is particularly enthusiastic about the institute's "Peer to Peer" national tour. He men-



Herbie Hancock (left) and Tom Carter with former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright

tions the benefits of having established artists such as Antonio Hart, Ingrid Jensen and Gerald Clayton shoulder some of the institute's finest rising talents as they visit 10 performing arts high schools across the country and conduct jazz workshops.

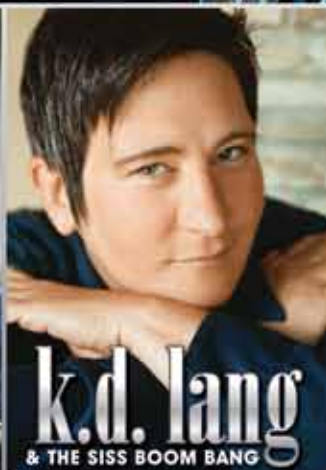
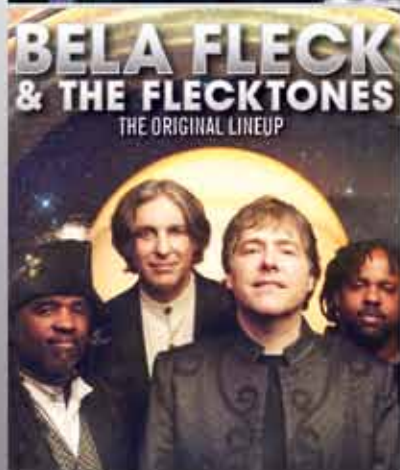
"When the performing arts students hear about jazz from kids who look and talk like them, they're more likely to listen," Dyas explains. "These kids say that sometimes they learn more in the 'Peer to Peer' session than they do from their band director. Thelonious Monk felt that there were two key elements in learning how to play jazz. Number one was that you had to learn from a master of the music. And two was that you had to perform, play and learn from your peers."

Focusing on education and young people has always been a cornerstone of the institute, even when it was briefly known as the Thelonious Monk Center for Jazz Studies. "When the first benefit concert took place at Constitution Hall in October 1986, we weren't sure if it was a benefit to raise money for a statue of Monk to place in Rocky Mount, N.C., or to develop an arts center," Carter recalls. "There was some discussion in the family, especially from Nellie Monk, that they wanted something living and vibrant and to involve young people. From there, the original concept was to establish a conservatory devoted exclusively to jazz."

The institute accomplishes that lofty goal, virtually and globally, through a college program that started at the New England Conservatory and then moved to the University of Southern California and Loyola University New Orleans, and six other education initiatives that involve high schools, arts organizations and international cultural exchange programs. Like its annual competition, the institute's education programs have proved to be clearinghouses for exceptional talent, many of whom are steeped in jazz tradition yet have found avenues to develop their own personal voice and thus continue pushing jazz forward. The illustrious list of artists who have come through the ranks of the institute's education program include Lionel Loueke, Ambrose Akinmusire and Gretchen Parlato. "The Monk Institute was a transformative experience," Parlato says. "I was one person going in and a different person coming out. It allowed me to come face to face with my music, my mindset, my fears, my hopes and my dreams—and unravel it all, find a sense of artistic direction and then gain the courage to follow it. I'm so grateful to everyone there."

Perhaps even more impressive than its sterling portfolio of accomplishments—which includes televised events at the White House and world-renowned competitions and gala extravaganzas—is that the institute has weathered several cycles of economic downturns. "One of the biggest misconceptions of the institute is that we're a rich, big organization with unlimited funds," Carter says. "There have been many economic challenges over the years. We're fortunate to have survived them. I wouldn't say that we're flourishing, but we are surviving. We provide all of our educational programs, worldwide, free of charge. The only event that we have every year that raises money for us and that involves a charge is the finals of the competition." When asked about new goals for the next 25 years, Carter again emphasizes jazz education. "We're very dedicated to our college program," he says. "Our goal is to make sure that the history of jazz is taught in every school system in America."

—John Murph



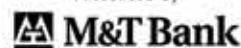
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greatest drummer in the world, and the kid wants to play the drums. I'm sending him to your house." [laughs] So, he sent me to Max. And then, he didn't say one word. That's at 15. At 19, I discover who he is, and he still hasn't said a damned word to me about what I'm playing!

The next year, when I was 20, he just comes sauntering through the house and asks, "Are you ready to play?" And two days later, I was on the bandstand. I was in his band. It went just like that.

I JUST STARTED PLAYING with the band, but I'd known from observing him that he wouldn't say anything. I never heard him say two good words about Charlie Rouse, either. So, I didn't feel bad. Thelonious was from that generation that, you know, you were supposed to be playing all that hip stuff. There was something to say if you weren't, but if you were, there really wasn't anything to say because that's what we do.

ONE NIGHT, we were playing at the Village Vanguard. The line was around the block. The show was packed. We hit it. Everybody went crazy, standing ovations. And during that performance I did something. I turned the beat around. Now, everybody knows that jazz is about recovery. It's all about the recovery. If you recover correctly, then no mistake took place. So, I recovered my butt off, right? So, I'm feeling groovy. I'm standing in the kitchen. I'm signing autographs. I'm grinning.

And I felt this presence ease up on me. So, Thelonious eases up next to me and leans down, while I'm signing autographs, and he says, "Stop f'ing up the music, man." I mean, for real. He didn't say "f'ing"—

it was the full monty. And I was stunned. The abject lesson was not that I made a mistake; the abject lesson was in accountability. Because, despite the applause, despite the accolades, I didn't come up to the bandstand and say, "Hey guys, I'm sorry I jammed us up." I acted like it never happened. I was completely awash in all this glorification.

For jazz musicians, the first line of communication is to the other musicians with you on the bandstand. And there's a respect that goes along with that. If everybody played it right and you know you played it wrong, don't act like you didn't play it wrong. Sound everybody [out], and say, "You know, I jammed that up. And thank you, you gave me that 'one' that got me back. And thank you for not freaking out because I know the changes were jammed up."

THELONIOUS USED TO TEACH lessons like that all the time. He taught Ben Riley a lesson in lateness once. This was before I was playing with the band. They were playing in Cleveland. I'll never forget because it was a gangster joint called Leo's Casino. And when we got in the joint, I swear everybody in the joint looked like they were straight out of *The Godfather*.

Across the street from Leo's Casino was a strip joint, right? The two young guys in the band were Larry Gales and Ben Riley. So, naturally, in between sets these guys are saying, "Hey, let's go see what the girls are doing." So they started going over to see what the girls were doing. They were going over every night. ... But I could see, because I was going to the club every night, that they were cutting it closer and closer and closer to set time. And this one night, Larry Gales came running back, but Ben ain't there.

The Monk Competition: A notable timeline

1987: Marcus Roberts wins the inaugural Piano Competition.

1990: The institute introduces another instrument into the event as Ryan Kisor wins the Trumpet Competition.

1991: In one of the institute's most fabled events, **Joshua Redman** wins the first Saxophone Competition. Runners-up Chris Potter, Eric Alexander and Tim Warfield and others also establish strong solo careers.



1992: For the first Drums Competition, the institute moves the event to Lincoln Center and crowns Harold Summey the winner.

1993: Jacky Terrasson wins the Piano Competition.

1998: A 64-year-old Teri Thornton wins the Vocals Competition, breaking the long-held rule of winners not having released albums on a major label. (She recorded for Riverside in the early '60s.) Jane Monheit and Roberta Gambarini also compete.

2000: The institute takes a stylistic risk with its first Afro-Latin Jazz Hand Drum Competition, and Pedro Martinez is the winner.

2002: The institute crowns Seamus Blake the Saxophone Competition winner, generating controversy. Blake had already embarked on a noteworthy solo career (with several impressive discs on Criss Cross Records), and he was a member of the Mingus Big Band.

2004: **Gretchen Parlato** wins the third annual Vocals Competition. She becomes a leader of a new wave of jazz singing.



2007: The event goes to Los Angeles. The Trumpet Competition winner is Ambrose Akinmusire (now signed to Blue Note).

2008: Jon Irabagon, a member of the band Mostly Other People Do The Killing, wins the Saxophone Competition.

And Thelonious was of a mind [*T.S. looks at his watch*]: “Hit it.” So, they hit without Ben Riley. This is going to sound unbelievable, but I swear I’m not lying. About 10 minutes into the set, Ben Riley comes running into the club...*running into the club*. He done jammed up. He runs up onto the bandstand and gets into the groove. So, I’m sitting there saying, “OK, everything’s groovy now. Everything’s cool.” So, Rouse takes a solo, Thelonious takes a solo and Larry Gales takes a solo. And Ben goes to take his solo.

When Ben takes his solo, Thelonious gets up off the piano. He looks at Rouse and says, “Come here.” He looks at Larry Gales and says, “Come here.” They go walking down off the bandstand, and he looks at me and says, “C’mom.” I follow him. We go out of the club. We get in a taxi. We go back to the hotel. We go up to the room. Thelonious had a room with a record player. He puts on Art Tatum. So, me, Thelonious, Charlie Rouse and Larry Gales are back at the hotel listening to Art Tatum records.

Nobody’s saying a word. Larry and Rouse ain’t saying nothing to Thelonious. I don’t know what’s going on, so I’m not saying anything. I’m just following everybody. I swear we must have stayed there for 15 or 20 minutes. All of a sudden, Thelonious says, “OK, let’s go back.”

We go downstairs. We have to wait for the guy to get us a cab. We get a cab. We go back to the club. I can tell you that when we got back to the club, Ben Riley was a shell of his former self. He had been up on that bandstand for about 45 minutes soloing. Needless to say, Ben Riley was never late again. [*laughs*]

WHAT HAPPENED TO JAZZ EDUCATION

in the first 40 years was that it was discovered. It was realized that this music, which came from these untrained, sometimes uneducated African Americans, was one of the most highly intellectual endeavors ever tried on the planet Earth. And when white music educators discovered that, they tried to hijack the music without the artisans. So, for instance, by the mid-’60s, schools were creating curricula on bebop. Now, in the 1960s, Thelonious Monk was alive. Dizzy Gillespie was alive. Max Roach was alive. Hank Jones was alive. Roy Haynes was alive. All those founders of bebop were alive. Did any of them get a call from a curriculum development person? No, they didn’t.

THE THELONIOUS MONK INSTITUTE OF JAZZ

was formed in 1986. Basically, the idea was to recreate the interface that I had grown up with. I knew the best way to teach jazz was to put young musicians with the masters. That’s how I learned. That’s how my daddy learned. That’s how John Coltrane learned. That’s how Miles learned. That’s how everybody learned. So, this is very different than how you teach European classical music.

Jazz is a very hands-on music. It’s passed down personally. It comes out of the African tradition—the oral tradition. So, you pass it


down that way. And that is what gave rise to the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz.

In the past 25 years, we have tried to interact with anybody who is anybody in jazz. And more importantly, we’ve tried to interact with everybody who has been profoundly influenced by jazz.

EVERY PROGRAM for the past 25 years, every single program that the Monk Institute has done, has been 100 percent free for our students. No kid has had to pay a nickel to inter-

act with Herbie Hancock; not a dime to interact with Ron Carter or Wayne Shorter or Jimmy Heath or Clark Terry or any of the people who have been involved.

THIS IS THE MOST wonderful music. This is the most human music of all time. It will never go anywhere unless human beings stop desiring to be individuals. And that’s not going to happen. So, we are healthier now, despite marketplaces and all that stuff. As an art form, we are healthier now than we have ever been. **DB**



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G O R D O N G O O D W I N

THINKING BIG ON THE LEFT COAST

By Josef Woodard

Despite its built-in challenges and logistical hurdles, big band jazz will never die. To borrow a phrase from the financial sector, it's too big to fail. A great American cultural invention, some eight decades deep now and a survivor of various dark periods, big band culture has spread around the world. Of course, it couldn't survive without the passion of its players and listeners, and more large-scale support systems, which have included the expanding ranks of jazz-friendly academia from high school on up, and, in Europe and parts outside America, the blessing of official support and government-funded big bands.

And then there is Hollywood.

Thanks to the high concentration of top-drawer musicians in Hollywood who are willing and eager to play jazz—not to mention the periodic flowerings of big band jazz in pop cultural programming—Southern California is a hotbed of big band activity, but it doesn't get enough credit as such. One of the well-established big bands in the region, and on the larger international big band scene, is Gordon Goodwin's Big Phat Band.

For many years, Goodwin's "day gig" has been in the entertainment industry trenches, as composer, conductor, arranger/orchestrator, player (saxophone and piano), songwriter and all-around musical force for hire. Following his heart (though not his wallet), he launched the Big Phat Band in 2000. This spring, his band's sparkling and diverse new album, *That's How We Roll*, marks its sixth release to date, and the first for the Telarc label. Along the way, the band has pulled in Grammy nominations, hosted guests including Chick Corea, Michael Brecker and, on the new album, Take Six, and become a big band force to reckon with.

Recently, Goodwin sat down—and roved around the room—for an interview in his well-outfitted home studio in Thousand Oaks, Calif., the bedroom community located about a half-hour from downtown Los Angeles, or, say, the historic working quarters of the Warner Bros. compound in Burbank. Keyboards and computers take their natural place in the room, and Goodwin moves from outpost to outpost, showing an animated video featuring the band, dem-

onstrating a harmonic idea on the keyboard and illustrating a point on an actual chart (handwritten on manuscript paper), all the while speaking eloquently. In short, he can't help but demonstrate his multitasker's aplomb, which is necessary for his multitiered musical life.

Not incidentally, Goodwin's musical purview is multi-attitudinal, which shows on the new album, moving as it does from brassy old-school swing to funkier grooves and accessible melodies to intricate arrangement twists and thickened musical plots. All the while, like the BPB albums before it, *That's How We Roll* certainly does roll along, incorporating eclecticism without getting esoteric in the process.

Eclecticism is something Goodwin naturally embraces. "When I got out of high school, I was kind of a jazz snob," he admits. "I hated r&b and rock 'n' roll, and I hated classical music. I just wanted to hear jazz all the time. I got into college and in those days, they said, 'No, there's no jazz major. You're going to be a classical saxophone major, and you're going to study counterpoint and conducting and orchestration'—things I had no interest in. But I'm glad they did, because now, not only has it allowed me to write a song like 'Hunting Wabbits,'" he says, citing one of the new album's more complex tunes, "but it has enabled me to work in film and conduct orchestras, which enables me to keep the lights on around here. *That* doesn't," he says with a laugh while pointing to a Big Phat Band poster on a nearby wall.

"Also in college, when I realized I needed to make a dollar, I joined a little club band and

I was playing Stevie Wonder songs at night. I kind of got that into my body and learned what that was about. I think I came out of the whole thing with appreciation for a wider range, stylistically, and thought, 'Why can't a big band do that?' Just because Count Basie's band didn't play funk music, maybe we could.

"It's a problem now to market it. Nowadays, to market it, we like to put it in a box, in a slot, and say, 'What is this?' If you listened to our record, 'Hunting Wabbits' is going to sound completely different than the Take Six song 'Never Enough,' which is pretty funky, or 'It's Not Polite To Point,' which is straight-ahead Basie-era swing. All those forms of music mean something to me, so I guess if people don't like a track, they can go to the next track and find something they do like. But hopefully, it would be like radio used to be, where they played so many different styles. That educated us when we were coming up."

Part of Goodwin's diverse musical interests is inherent in his artistic being; another part is necessitated by the flexibility required to suit the varied jobs at hand. When he's in composer mode for his own big band, he's completely free from outside commercial pressures. "When I do sit down to write, I am inspired by other people's music," Goodwin says. "I'm not inspired by the mountains, or, like Maria Schneider, who is inspired by dancing. Not me. If I want to write a piece of music, I usually know what the target is. It could be, 'I feel like I want to write a Latin piece.' I'll lis-



ten to three or four things from Latin music and get that going inside of me. That usually spurs something. And hopefully, I don't plagiarize.

"I've always been inspired by music," he continues. "That's why it puzzles me that some people aren't. I think there are some people, especially in this town," he jerks his thumb and points south, in the direction of Los Angeles, "who don't really care too much about music."

He knows from whence he speaks. Born in Wichita, Kan., in 1954, Goodwin worked his way through college big band work in the high-profile music program at California State

University, Northridge, to play with jazz bands led by Louie Bellson and others, alongside Don Menza and Pete Christlieb, and landing squarely in the music world of Hollywood's film, TV and recording scene.

"With the movie industry, I've been really lucky," he explains. "For me, it has sponsored the Big Phat Band, like my work with Trevor Rabin and the movies he has done. We just did the movie *I Am Number Four*, which is a little underperforming. Those movies pay health insurance and benefits. As I say, it enables me to do the Big Phat Band. For me, it's seeking that

balance between that world and this world.

"It's a great, interesting life. I'm never bored. I've seen musicians in this town, L.A., turn into businessmen. They do the same thing every day, and they make good money doing it, but they forgot why they're picking up their instruments, in my view.

"I don't want to be hypocritical, because I've gotten paid more money for simpler music. Most of the time, simpler projects that don't take much brain power pay more money than, say"—he moves over to his note-filled manuscript for "It's Not Polite To Point"—"the trombone thing I wrote. It took me years to figure out how to do that."

Goodwin has two college-age children, both headed for a life in the arts—his daughter Madison, at the Pacific Academy of Fine Arts, and his son Trevor, a bassist going to Berklee College of Music. His wife, Lisa, is a songwriter with whom he often collaborates, as they did on the new Take Six song "Never Enough."

He agrees with the notion that raising children is a good training process for leading a big band, saying, "It trains you to persevere. With kids, there is no 'ta-da' moment, no 'you did it.' Your kids are never done. It's kind of the same with a big band career. People say, 'How do you feel about what you've done, this or that?' It still feels like we're building it, five albums later. It doesn't help that the landscape is shifting under us."

He's referring to the issue of a strained music industry, especially in the jazz end of the music-buying world—really a subculture—struggling with radically weakened CD sales and a record label scene gone lean. So far, the BPB's discography—*Swingin' For The Fences* (2001), *XXL* (2003), *The Phat Pack* (2006), *Bah, Humduck! A Looney Tunes Christmas* (2006), *Act Your Age* (2008) and now *That's How We Roll*—has swept across a landscape of diminishing returns. But the musical strength and will to move forward prevail.

Marketing has been an aspect of Goodwin's thinking as a bandleader going back to the earliest days, when he had the idea of establishing a band logo and sought to appeal to the underserved high school "band geek" population, which already knew him as a popular big band composer. As for marketing your wares in jazz—the "m-word," he says—"It seems like there is a school of thought with some jazz musicians who think it unseemly, as if the music is not enough on its own. Frankly, I don't think the music isn't enough on its own. It's such a loud, cacophonous jungle out there.

"I don't think there's any answer to it. Everyone forges their own path through the jungle. But basic marketing principles are repetition of the idea. And if it's a simple idea, like a simple logo, and people see it enough, it might register and you might start to get a little traction. Then your music is enough."

He has been working on unconventional music videos to get the BPB message out to the YouTube world, including a project with online

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animation wizard (and fine saxophonist) Allen Mezquida, of “Smigly” fame. One hilarious video, called “Kind Of Black And Blue,” uses the trombone-centric tune “It’s Not Polite To Point.” Goodwin is keen to explore online strategies less taken by other jazz groups or entities.

“That always appealed to me,” Goodwin comments, “to try and think a little bit out of the traditional box. How can we have some fun with this? That’s a big part of what we do. I’m lucky that both labels I’ve been with—Emergent Records and now Concord—are open to doing traditional marketing, but also seeing what other options there are.”

One of the more complex charts represented on Goodwin’s new album, and a piece with surprisingly rich roots, is also deceptively cartoony. “Hunting Wabbits 3 (Get Off My Lawn)” showcases abrupt shifts of mood and meter in tribute to the schizoid nature of “Looney Tunes” music and, in particular, the genius of late composer-compiler Carl Stalling.

Beyond the charm and energy of the music itself, the piece touches on another Hollywood angle, an occasion where high and low culture meet, and sometimes without the general public’s awareness in the bargain. Big band jazz and orchestral music have long snuck into the public ear through programs such as “The Flintstones” and through more modern examples like “Animaniacs” (which Goodwin worked on) and “The Simpsons.”

As Goodwin himself notes, his first exposure to classical music came through Stalling’s TV tune-smithing. He points out, “The first classical music I ever heard was in a Bugs Bunny cartoon.” That’s a cogent point because Brad Bird, director of *The Incredibles* (for which Goodwin won a Grammy for his work), wanted to bring that sound into his movie. Goodwin says, “The piece I wrote for that movie was in that style. It exposed the sound of a big band—this was a bit of an orchestral big band—but nonetheless it brought that sound to untold millions.

“Johnny Carson insisted, ‘I want a big band in my show, and I want it to play a number once a week.’ Steven Spielberg did the same thing for ‘Animaniacs’ when we were working on that show. He said, ‘You can put my name on it, but I insist on a live orchestra, no library music and no synthesizers, and you score every episode.’ So it is always a guy with a passion for it that enables that. Spielberg enabled the 10 years of work with Warner Bros. that we did on those cartoons, in the big band style and the Carl Stalling style.”

After a newer generation of cartoon producers entered the picture, Goodwin says, “The network realized, ‘We don’t have to spend this kind of money on music.’ It all went away, and Rich [the team’s supervising composer, Richard Stone] was dead within a year. Pancreatic cancer came upon him. It was so sad for all of us, because it was the end of a second golden era for animation scoring, and the end of Rich, too.”

On the bright side, says Goodwin, “The next guy doing it is Seth MacFarlane, from ‘Family Guy.’ He’s got a new record coming out [later this year on the Universal Republic label].

He’s singing, and he’s a really good singer. They recorded it with orchestra and full big band.”

Of course, the gleaming sound and tight machinery of Goodwin’s band happens because of the high caliber of players involved, who are similarly committed to the genre, and who are similarly resigned to “day gigging” in Hollywood. As Goodwin explains, “I’ve been friends with many of the guys in my band for years and years, which is part of it. Most of them have made a commitment to lose money once in a while and be a part of the lineage. It wouldn’t happen without the musicians making that sacrifice.”

Regardless of the numbers game attached or the challenges, Goodwin’s passion for big band jazz appears to a lifelong condition. He’s aware of the historical lineage he’s a part of, and the emphasis on doing his part to move this musical culture forward.

“It’s still here,” he says of his beloved medium, “despite cultural indifference and economic and logistical problems, despite infighting within the jazz world—West Coast versus East Coast and all that bullshit. We can’t delude ourselves into thinking that it’s a popular form of music in our culture. But it is still here.” **DB**

The advertisement for RICO saxophones features a collage of six portraits of musicians: Miguel Zenón, Walt Weiskopf, Dave Pietro, Eric Alexander, James Carter, and Chris Potter. Each portrait is labeled with the musician's name. In the bottom left corner, there are two RICO saxophone products: a black and silver 'RICO RESERVE' alto saxophone and a silver 'RICO RESERVE' alto saxophone. The text 'we play rico' is prominently displayed in the bottom right. At the very bottom, small text reads: 'D'Addario & Company, Inc. 1 Farmingdale, NY 11735 USA 1 www.ricoreeds.com. RICO, Reserve, and Walt Weiskopf are registered trademarks or trademarks of D'Addario & Company, Inc. or its affiliates in the United States and/or other countries. © 2011. All rights reserved.'



T E R E L L S T A F F O R D

Inside The Big Picture

By Shaun Brady

For most young jazz musicians, landing on the cover of *DownBeat* during your first tour would be a major career boost. For 24-year-old Terell Stafford, however, the July 1991 cover—on which he stands out among his bandmates in Bobby Watson's *Horizon*, clutching his horn and sporting a multihued, only-in-1991 tie—proved to be an unanticipated headache.

Stafford was in his final year of graduate studies at Rutgers University as a classical trumpet major when Watson called, offering him the spot in *Horizon* and an upcoming tour. "If you were a classical major and you went out with a classical ensemble, or a jazz major with a jazz ensemble, then you got professional leave—but not vice versa," Stafford explains. "You had to drop out of school. So I told a small story; I told the people at Rutgers I was going on the road with the Robert Watson Chamber Ensemble."

The rest of the story unfolded with the tidy farce of a sitcom: A few months later, a photo shoot suddenly became the fateful cover image, emblazoned with the headline "Red Hot! Bobby Watson's *Horizon* Burns," which Stafford later saw Rutgers' dean brandish as he handed down a one-year suspension for academic dishonesty.

Sitting in his office at Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance in Philadelphia, where he has served as director of jazz studies for 16 years, Stafford can look back at the story and laugh. "It was the stupidest thing I could have done," he says, shaking his head.

It's unlikely that any of the students under Stafford's guidance would face the same kind of troubles today. This year he took on the additional title of chair of instrumental studies, which means that he now oversees classical as well as jazz students, and prides himself on encouraging the two disciplines to intermingle. Those two worlds drew a little closer last year when *fourth stream ... La Banda*, a piece written by pianist Bill Cunliffe and

performed by Stafford with a student jazz rhythm section and the Temple University Orchestra, was nominated for a Grammy in the best instrumental composition category.

"I've always felt that the classical musicians I respect the most look at music as music, not classical or jazz," he says. "I have a vision for both sides, and I think I primarily have the gig because of vision. It's all about letting the two worlds see that we don't really exist that far apart and that there's a lot of respect between us if we have open minds. It's been a dream come true to see the guys in my big band sitting at an orchestra concert, or see the classical folks show up when the jazz players have their concerts."

The educational workload—which also includes time spent as a clinician at the Vail Foundation in Colorado and Jazz at Lincoln Center's Essentially Ellington program—would be enough to qualify for workaholic status, but it only takes up half of Stafford's concentration.

"I don't let it consume who I am," he says of his educational work, "but I try to let who I am come through at the school. If it consumes you, then you start to push your music aside."

One look at Stafford's output and it's clear that his own endeavors have remained front and center both as leader of his long-standing quintet and as an in-demand sideman, including considerable stints with the Clayton Brothers Band, Matt Wilson's Arts & Crafts and the Vanguard Jazz Orchestra. The latest manifestation is *This Side Of Strayhorn*, a set consisting mostly of the

legendary composer's lesser-known works.

"I didn't want to just do 'Chelsea Bridge' and the songs everyone expects you to do," Stafford explains. "There's so much other beautiful music that has been written and can be explored."

The project began when Stafford was invited to be part of "Celebrating Billy Strayhorn," a weeklong event held in the composer's hometown of Dayton, Ohio, in April 2009. He worked with Dutch musicologist Walter van de Leur and Billy Strayhorn Songs Inc. (founded to maintain Strayhorn's legacy and promote his music) to select the repertoire and then handed arranging duties over to his longtime pianist, Bruce Barth.

"I've been enamored with Strayhorn's music and Terell's playing for many, many years, and the chance to put the two together was a thrill," says Barth. "The songs of Billy Strayhorn have such great melodies and rich harmonies that I wanted to write arrangements that let the music shine and left the band plenty of creative space. With Terell's beautiful tone and interpretive power, I wrote plenty of sections where he could freely phrase and embellish."

Four songs on the album were previously recorded by Art Farmer (a major influence on Stafford) for his 1987 Strayhorn tribute, *Something To Live For*. Others were songs that Stafford had played in various bands over the years. Barth drew Stafford's attention to the little-recorded "Lana Turner" in a big band arrangement. For every selection, Stafford did a lot of listening and chose songs that spoke to him.

"I'm a melody person, period," Stafford says. "That's the main thing that's always attracted me to Strayhorn. There's so much emotion in his melodies and the way he connects the lyrics to a melody. He was so complex harmonically, in such a way that everything sounds super subtle until you start to dive into it. I think every quality that I feel passionate about when it comes to his music is still in our music."

In the studio, Stafford was surrounded by longtime friends and bandmates. To produce, he took up an offer from bassist John Clayton, with whom he's performed in the Clayton Brothers Band for many years. Besides Barth on the piano, the quintet consists of Dana Hall on drums, Peter Washington on bass and Tim Warfield, Stafford's oldest friend and collaborator, on saxophones.

Clayton's guidance and this gathering of "old buddies" created a comfort zone that led Stafford to stretch out. He reached back into the music's history for the sepia-tinged elegance of "My Little Brown Book" and the Kansas City swagger of "Multicolored Blue."

"I love the older style," Stafford says. "I love Roy Eldridge. I love Pops, Bubber Miley, Cootie Williams, Ruby Braff. I love that singing, melodic style of trumpet playing. Some of the tunes on this record leant themselves to that, so I got to show another side. And now that I'm hooked into it, it's really starting to help my more modern playing. I want more of that history to creep inside of who I am."

Not that Stafford has adhered to the straight-and-narrow path so often ascribed to him—especially not after a decade-long tenure in drummer Matt Wilson's playful, style-juggling quartet Arts & Crafts.

"Everything Terell does is totally real—as a musician and as a person," Wilson says. "He's so honest in what he plays yet he's very courageous and always willing to try things. It's always really fun to throw him in some situation and hear how his personality and his sound will emerge."

Stepping into Wilson's world was a bold move for Stafford, who had to adjust to a more spontaneous, off-the-cuff style, accustomed as he was at the time to strictly playing over changes. "I was so uncomfortable," he says. "I didn't have anything to play over; I felt like I didn't have anything to offer. And then I started to listen to Don Cherry, and Ornette, even Trane, and I realized that what you play doesn't have to be in a box. So playing with Matt, I just come out to create."

Arts & Crafts was far from the first instance where Stafford challenged himself to venture outside of his comfort zone, however. In fact, his entire history is filled with such adventures—his transition from classical to jazz undoubtedly the prime example.

Stafford picked up the trumpet for the first time at age 13. He chose the instrument, as did so many horn players of his generation, after hearing Chuck Mangione's 1978 hit "Feels So Good." But despite his father, a classmate of Cannonball

Adderley's, encouraging him to listen to more jazz, Stafford was more intent on classical music, inspired by French virtuoso Maurice André.

Born in Miami in 1966, Stafford found himself uprooted to the Midwest at an early age after his father, a regional manager for 7-Eleven, was robbed several times in rapid succession while filling in for store managers in his area.



The evidence: DownBeat's July 1991 cover

Living in Elk Grove Village, a suburb located northwest of Chicago, Stafford got involved in a stellar music program with dedicated teachers and enthusiastic fellow students. "Playing in the Midwest was unbelievable," he says. "My middle school band director pushed us like never before. In seventh or eighth grade band, I was already playing pieces that most people play when they're in high school: 'Bugler's Holiday' and 'Carnival Of Venice,' not easy stuff. We didn't know any different. We'd just go practice and make it happen. Then my dad made his big announcement that we're going to be moving to the D.C. area."

Attending high school in Silver Spring, Md., Stafford suddenly was thrust into a very different environment. "Nobody respected the band director, they were joking around and the band sounded awful," he recalls. Miserable at his immediate prospects, Stafford dedicated himself to landing a scholarship to continue his studies, which eventually paid off in a full ride at the University of Maryland. His parents, however, insisted he major in education rather than classical trumpet.

"Going to school for a backup is the worst thing that anybody could ever do," Stafford says. "It's one thing if my passion and desire were to be an educator. But my mom was a teacher, and I could see how hard she worked. My negativity came from watching my mother come home hurt by kids who didn't want to learn. So I was bitter because I was forced into education."

So bitter, in fact, that after college he briefly quit playing, finding work as a computer programmer at an insurance company. "But then

the bug bit me again," he says, and through the encouragement of Wynton Marsalis he made his way to Rutgers.

Then Stafford turned his attention to jazz, making connections with David Sánchez and Kenny Barron. He began to travel back to Washington, D.C., once a week to hone his chops in a friend's jam session. "I went down to try and learn tunes, figure out feel, learn vocabulary," Stafford recalls. "It was so overwhelming, and people were making fun of me, saying I sounded like a classical cat."

One week, saxophonist Warfield stepped in to lead the session, resulting in a personal and professional friendship that has endured to this day.

"Clearly our friendship, one of admiration and respect, translates to the bandstand as well," Warfield says. "He now has a fearlessness on the horn, the result of becoming comfortable with himself, and his willingness to defer to others for the sake of growth has helped him develop a strong character, which I believe in turn has led to his sparkling reputation."

As the two built a rapport, they began frequenting jam sessions; eventually, organ great Shirley Scott hired them for her own band and in her role as musical director for Bill Cosby's 1992 series "You Bet Your Life." Scott also encouraged Stafford (with an additional nudge from Cosby himself) to re-enter academia, where he took his first teaching job at Cheyney University.

It was also at Rutgers that Stafford received the fateful call from Watson that landed him on the cover of this magazine and in hot water. "I knew he had it," Watson says of his first encounter with Stafford. "When you hear Terell, you hear passion. He uplifts the listener."

A few years after joining Horizon, Stafford was enlisted for McCoy Tyner's Latin All-Stars group. He refers to both as incomparable real-world experiences—and trials by fire. "I was getting opportunities way before I was ready," he says. "I was thankful for them, don't get me wrong, but I wish I could have been at a different place in my knowledge base. All those things really help with what I do now, teaching here."

Through his position at Temple, Stafford hopes to add those sorts of experiences to the more traditional academic learning. Bassist Derrick Hodge, a former student-turned-sideman of Stafford's, says, "I came from a high school that was a hotbed of talent, but it was a lot of oral training. From the beginning, when I walked into Temple with my electric bass, without any knowledge of a jazz record, he was encouraging of not letting go of what it is that makes you *you*."

Stafford aims simply to integrate his educational and musical roles. "I wanted to bring the family vibe that I've seen in the music community to the school. I travel to a lot of different universities and it usually feels like I'm *in* a university. Many people get lost in these four walls and forget the big picture. So if we can bring the big picture here and then start to work on the intricacies inside of the big picture, then hopefully we can create our own picture for people to look at."

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JAMES GENUS

The Twain Shall Meet

By Jim Macnie

“**Y**ou sit right there,” says Lenny Pickett. “That’s going to give you a good view.” There’s not much room between organist Leon Pendarvis and drummer Shawn Pelton, but being sandwiched into an onstage cranny with the “Saturday Night Live” band has its perks. One, you get to hear how tight this group is. And two, you get to see bassist James Genus in action.

Pelton has gloves on; he likes a good grip when he splashes. Saxophonist Ron Blake is wearing a smile; he’s tickled by his cohort’s rowdiness. Bandleader Pickett is popping a vein in his neck; bringing holy hell to a tenor sax is a very physical job. But Genus is calm. His fingers are gliding over the neck of his five-string; judiciousness and propulsion in a nifty *pas de deux*. He pops one particular note and Pelton cracks his crash cymbal. As usual, Genus is feeding the fire.

The 45-year-old bassist sits right up front on the stage. At 6 feet, 4 inches tall, he’s a big dude, and millions of viewers can easily see him on their screens during the band’s weekly romps. But there’s a certain anonymity that accompanies his work as well. Genus is both known and unknown. He’s deeply respected by the jazz community, where his skills earn him a constant flow of gigs both in the studio and on the stage. But to the general public, he’s inconspicuous. He doesn’t keep a publicist on retainer, and has never had a major article written about him in prominent jazz magazines. A lack of leadership status—the bassist has yet to cut a record under his own name—renders his recognition factor a lot lower than it would be otherwise.

Perhaps this is the perpetual plight of the sideman. Perhaps it’s not a plight at all. Few players get to create with the likes of Herbie Hancock, Michael Brecker and Dave Douglas. Genus has spent substantial time with each of them. He also has fluidly worked with Uri Caine and Bob James,

two pianists who boast distinctly different aesthetics. Turns out the bassist is as agile in his career choices as he is on his instrument. It’s a tack that has earned him a parade of compliments.

“James is a groove doctor,” says drummer Jeff “Tain” Watts, “but he’s also comfortable sliding around, making music that’s closer to a Charlie Haden sensibility, where things need to be a bit loose. Some people are rhythmically tight; they act like clocks. But there’s a certain kind of music that has to ebb and flow. James is one of the few who can address both sides.”

A quick search at YouTube illustrates Watts’ point. In 1992, Genus wielded his electric ax to help the Brecker Brothers reunite. There’s a smoking clip of “Some Skunk Funk” that demonstrates the rewards of precision. “If he felt any trepidation, it sure didn’t show when he played,” says trumpeter Randy Brecker. “James is able to cut most everything on the first take or two.” Another YouTube clip has footage of the Dave Douglas New Quintet rolling through “The Infinite.” There, on his upright instrument, Genus provides four different definitions of the term “pulse.”

“Musicians learn to work with a lot of different people and different styles,” says Caine. “They’re trying to fit in and make stuff sound good. It’s a fun way to play because you’re dealing with so many things. James definitely has that down—totally versatile.”

“He’s primarily an electric bass player—or that’s what I’ve seen,”

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muses Hancock. "But actually I should qualify that, because his stuff on acoustic bass is really...hey, maybe that's what he's been doing all these years. From my point of view, he's at the top of his game with either one, and I'm not actually used to that. It's unique."

A few nights after the festivities at 30 Rock, where he provided plenty of punch to Kenan Thompson's spin through Elton John's "Saturday Night's Alright For Fighting," Genus was in Seattle, working a trio gig with guitarist Oz Noy and drummer Dave Weckl. A couple of days after that, he was in a New York studio, trying to make a new set of tunes by saxophonist Alex Foster come alive. And a day or so after that, he was enjoying a Brooklyn lunch, and explaining himself a bit.

Sure, he's always wanted to make his own album, but no, he's not quite firm on what that music would sound like. And of course, he writes a bit and is currently working on something that involves songs and voices just as much as it does jazz and improv, but absolutely, jazz and improv are dear to his heart. And yeah, it is mildly frustrating that he has procrastinated when it comes to defining himself as an artist, and wow, he definitely feels guilty about the fact that his website has boasted a "coming soon" message for more than two years. And he does wonder whether he is actually a true artist—versus merely a talented improvising instrumentalist.

In conversation, Genus exudes warmth and doesn't have many walls around him. He smiles demurely when I tell him his colleagues have waxed glowingly about him. Several artists mentioned how easy it is to bond with the bassist. In an e-mail, Douglas cited Genus' deep improvising prowess but also brought up his personality. "He can get along with anyone," Douglas said. "He's the guy you want on the road when things go south because he can make any situation work out, on or off the bandstand. I can't count the times James has been the solution to problems, big and small."

Between bites of a turkey sandwich, Genus says that it's more and more important to him to have an affinity with the musicians he plays with. "At first, when you're trying to get established, you put up with stuff you don't want to put up with—basically play with anyone. These days I feel strongly about being with the right people. When I was with Dave and the guys, we had lots of fun. I never really understood how musicians could tour with people they didn't like."

Singer Dominique Eade connected with Genus in a shot. She met him on a gig with pianist Bruce Barth at New York's Village Gate, and fell for his playing from the get-go. "There was no drummer with us, so his percussive side really came through. Later we bonded at Bradley's, where I went to recuperate after playing a free improvisation performance that had gone astray. I really dug talking to him and felt like we were on the same wavelength about where we wanted music to be coming from, a feeling that transcends style. That creed clearly stayed with him as he developed in the years that followed, in all those different settings that he has played."

Genus believes that 20 years ago, there was a prevalent, divisive mentality that pitted funk against swing. "There were a lot of purists back then. You might play Mondo Perso or Bradley's, but not both—never the twain shall meet. But that kind of thinking has disappeared to a large degree. These days, musically, it's all come together."

Genus grew up in Richmond, Va., and tried guitar for a while as a kid. His parents made him practice, but he wasn't exactly disciplined. He put down the six-string and eventually grabbed a bass, which felt more to his liking. He worked in area bands, played r&b at Busch Gardens, did dates with a country music group, and while attending Virginia Commonwealth University, was taught by pianist Ellis Marsalis. "He said New York was the place to be," Genus recalls. "This was around the time of Wynton's rise. It was scary, but I did it, and being in the city was fun right from the start."

Sessions at Barth's house (a hotbed of Brooklyn talent during the late '80s) let everyone know that Genus had unusual skills. Pianist David Kikoski quickly ushered him into Roy Haynes' group, and the phone kept ringing from that point on. It was the start of a huge career zigzag. His first high-vis album, Don Pullen's *Random Thoughts*, was on Blue Note. The bassist has made albums with James Carter, Eldar, John Beasley, Ravi Coltrane, Chris Botti, Rondi Charleston and many other acts. According to Douglas, Genus was the "backbone" of the trumpeter's groups by the early '90s. Writing from Vienna, Austria, Douglas cites the opening of "In Our

Lifetime” as a chance to hear Genus’ ability to drive a groove and provide “a subtle harmonic underpinning in what is more or less a free context.” Long story short, he swings the hell out of the bass line.

Genus began playing with Hancock in 2008, and says one of the key goose-bump moments in his career was during a gig that found him in a one-off quartet with the pianist, Wayne Shorter and Terri Lyne Carrington. “You know how people say, ‘He can play anything?’” offers Genus about his occasional boss. “Well, he can. The way he accompanies, the way he constantly listens. He doesn’t like everything to be calculated. He likes to take chances. And when he sees that you’re taking chances, he really starts to go for it.”

The phrase “going for it” has resonance in Genus’ life these days. The lack of his own album is finally getting to him. He says his pal Greg Osby has been pushing him to document his stuff for years. But Genus has wrestled with the overwhelming quandary of direction: What should his first move be? “Some people deeply feel the need to lead. I have the impulse to put a band together, but I also have questions. Which way would I go? I don’t know if I’m an actual artist, but I do think I have a voice; I know I have something to say. I’m pretty sure this is going to be my year to make a record.”

Osby—a bandleader, educator and head of his own record label, Inner Circle Music—is a natural provocateur. “There has to be some initiation taken to get [these kinds of musicians] out of that sideman deal, that hamster on a [wheel] thing,” Osby says. “They’re moving a lot, but they’re not really developing any stature as a composing artist. Their artistry is made for other people—being a hired gun.

“But you can tell James has got it. Listen to him solo: There’s finesse, development, logic, storytelling. If he took one of his solos, or recorded himself practicing, and then transcribed excerpts and reworked them, he’d have a composition. A lot of people are fearful of writing because they view it comparatively, always glancing at the stellar offerings of the nobles who preceded them. Needless to say, that stance will definitely keep you in the starting gate after the gun goes off.”

Watts believes the fact that Genus hasn’t been in a hurry is a “testament” to his musicianship. “There’s a percentage of young players who love music but are looking for a big break,” he says. “They take gigs to enhance their portfolio, more concerned with the associations they make, rather than putting their energy into what they’re playing at the moment. They make their records before there’s anything to really say. James has been biding his time.”

Genus may not have an album, but he does have gigs. That’s how it is for a player Osby deems a “go-to” guy. The bassist was part of an ensemble that entertained President Obama and distinguished guests during the recent visit by Hu Jintao, president of China. Hancock performed as well, and said the relatively intimate East Room of the White House was a chance to hear “all the nuances” Genus regularly employs. “He was completely covering it,” Hancock says. “There was nothing in my mind that would cause me to look over and go, ‘Oh yeah, right, he’s really an electric bass player.’”

Pickett sanctioned Genus’ recent sabbatical from “Saturday Night Live” for practical reasons. The saxophonist says his pal missed some shows while accompanying Hancock on a European tour, but he’d prefer to have Genus on the team when he can be there, rather than miss him altogether. “In some ways, giving him a bit of freedom is key to keeping him around,” Pickett says. “We want him here. What the bass player does in a band is both important and hard to describe. When you get someone who has a feel for it and understands the role, things really take off. James can play a lot and not sound busy; he can play a little and not be boring. It’s something about the way he moves the notes, the individual pitches, giving them a liveliness that makes them incredibly satisfying.”

Pickett recalls the band playing a birthday party for a former “SNL” heavyweight and how sweetly the bassist slid into an impromptu jump through Cee Lo Green’s recent hit “Forget You.” The saxophonist is impressed at the “commitment and attitude” of his bandmate, citing that cover of “Saturday Night’s Alright For Fighting” as an example of Genus playing things exactly the way they should be played. “Good music comes in all sorts of categories,” Pickett says, “and I haven’t been able to stump him yet. That’s why it’s always fun, and that’s why we call him James ‘Genius.’”

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Nicholas Urie

Composer Nicholas Urie Walks on Wild Side

Rising composer and arranger Nicholas Urie has few, if any, vices. He doesn't smoke, he drinks only socially, and he's had the same girlfriend since 2009. He typically goes to bed before midnight so he can begin his workday at dawn. Yet Urie's recordings suggest a marked contrast from that lifestyle.

Urie's first release, *Excerpts From An Online Dating Service* (2009), features a song cycle of nine tracks incorporating text from the raunchy personal ads posted in the "casual encounters" section on Craigslist sites. A new album, *My Garden* (Red Piano), pays tribute to Charles Bukowski, whose fiction and poetry celebrate drunks, hookers and horseplayers. On both albums, Urie conducts a 13-piece working band steeped in the repertoire.

Urie, who turns 26 in July, rejects the notion that he identifies with the folks who inspire his music. By his own account, he's on the outside looking in.

"When I was finishing the project, I was like, 'Well, I should meet some woman on Craigslist.' And I just honestly didn't have the gumption to do it," Urie said. "I was interested in it more from a sociological point of view than from a sexual point of view."

While the themes on *Excerpts* extend to bondage and voyeurism, a track called "About Me" recalls the levity typical of musical theater productions. Urie often fashions the Craigslist text into perverse songs; the arrangements spotlight singer Christine Correa who sings, "And yes I have a picture you might like./ In it I'm banging my ex-wife."

"Cougar Seeks Prey" carries none of this buoyancy. "My husband will be attending/ But he won't join the fray," Correa sings, as the music builds tension via horn riffs and a free-form dialog among the track's three soloists; the per-

formance purposely avoids a climax or crescendo. John McNeil, the *Excerpts* producer, said that Urie's compositions "transform something that is just lewd and silly and ridiculous. Somehow the music has found a way to edify that stuff."

The Bukowski tribute, *My Garden*, has a different intent, bringing out a more poignant side of the Los Angeles native, even though the writer's alter ego, Henry Chinaski, is often funny and self-deprecating in recounting his many benders and one-night stands. Urie, who grew up in Los Angeles, is well acquainted with this version of Bukowski's outsized persona: Its influence extends from the city's underground rock clubs and galleries to Hollywood.

"There's another side [of Bukowski's poetry] that deals with his childhood, his insecurities as a man and as a writer," Urie said. "I think so much of his best work is neglected because it doesn't fit into people's impression of who he was."

The melancholy poems distinguish the Bukowski project from the tragicomedy of *Excerpts*. They serve as flash points for richly textured compositions that provide ample solo space. Unlike the arrangements on *Excerpts*, Correa's voice is cast here as a part of the ensemble, rather than as a focal point. "He's got a nice way of writing melodies that's unpredictable," said Correa. "He's hearing things in quite a sophisticated way."

Urie admires Gil Evans, Bob Brookmeyer and Steve Lacy, but he also cites the early 20th century operas of Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht, in addition to Béla Bartók. Urie likens two songs from *Excerpts*—"About Me" and "Bad Girl?"—to Weill's *Mahagonny*.

"They're almost like sociological studies," Urie said of Weill and Brecht's work. "But I like that. I like music to feel overtly political in a certain way."

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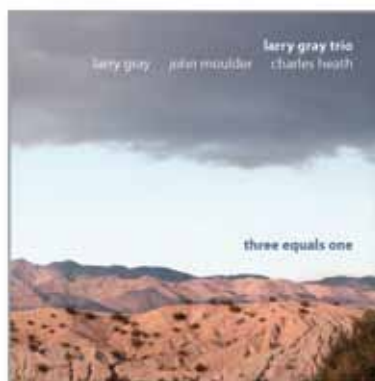
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Saxophonist Butman Jams in the Moscow Midnights

It wasn't until the close of a call with saxophonist Igor Butman (at his dacha near Moscow) that I realized our conversation had been scheduled for 3 a.m. in his time zone. Being active at such an hour is nothing new for the Leningrad-born saxophonist, who can claim two jazz clubs in the Russian capital named after him. In 1999 at a renowned earlier venue, Le Club, where Butman was artistic director, Wynton Marsalis jammed with him one time until 6 a.m.

"Wynton and I are great friends, and he kept his word that night," Butman said. "He promised to invite my big band to play at Lincoln Center, and four years later it happened."

Butman's stature as Russian jazz ambassador and spokesman parallels that of Marsalis in the United States, and the trumpeter has advised him in the development of an equivalent facility to Jazz at Lincoln Center in Moscow.

Plans for that center are in early stages, and Butman is busy disseminating Russian jazz.

"It's a fight to convince the world we export more than ballet, classical music, arms and missiles," Butman said.

Along with leading a 16-piece big band and quartet, Butman recently launched his own label, Butman Music, after Sony BMG dragged its heels with the followup to his fine 2007 release, *Magic Land*.

Butman Music has released recordings from pianists Andrei Kondakov and Ivan Farmakovsky; drummer Oleg Butman (Igor's brother) and Oleg's wife, pianist Natalia Smirnova; and trumpeter Alexander Berensen. Trumpeter Vadim Eilenkrig's Butman disc, *The Shadow Of Your Smile*, moves markedly in the direction of smooth jazz, but Butman, whom Grover Washington Jr. mentored, is unapologetic.

"Vadim is Russia's answer to Chris Botti. I don't want to stay mainstream. People criticized Freddie Hubbard under Creed Taylor's CTI production, but now *Red Clay* is a classic."

Butman emigrated to the United States in 1987 at the behest of Gary Burton and took a scholarship to Berklee College of Music. He moved to New York from Boston in 1989, then back to Russia in 1995.

The son of an engineer and part-time musician, Butman secured early lessons with renowned saxophonist Gennady Goldstein. He also heard jazz in the Soviet era through Voice of America's late-night radio broadcasts and a handful of overpriced LPs imported from Bulgaria. Switching from classical clarinet to jazz saxophone at The Rimsky-Korsakov College of Music, he devoured the music of Cannonball Adderley and Hank Mobley, and stole licks from Gary Bartz, Johnny Griffin and George Coleman. But Michael Brecker's influence was the most significant.

"I loved Mike from when I heard *Heavy*



Igor Butman

Metal Be-Bop and transcribed all his solos," Butman said. Years later, Butman called Brecker to play alongside him on a recording. "He told me to call him tomorrow at noon: I waited with my watch. Since I had done so much with Randy, he agreed to play on 'Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,' but refused payment."

Butman's mellow-then-ferocious, turn-on-a-dime technique and musicality caught the ear of Marsalis (who guests on *Moscow @ 3 a.m.*, Butman's big band album) and President Bill Clinton.

"Friends of Bill invited me to play at his birthday party, but I'd organized a birthday party for myself for the day before and members of the Kremlin were to be there," Butman said. After jamming past dawn at his own bash, Butman hopped a helicopter to a late-morning classical gig 150 miles north of Moscow, then jetted to New York just in time to surprise Clinton.

Despite such world-class notoriety, Butman recognizes the challenges of broadening the appeal of Russian jazz and floating his clubs, label and annual Triumph of Jazz and AquaJazz festivals, along with his ambitious Moscow jazz center. He's clearly borrowed strategies from Marsalis and the New York scene. Just as Marsalis colluded with Willie Nelson and Eric Clapton, Butman made connections with Russian rock star Sergei Mazaev and pop/jazz singer Larisa Dolina, and he toured widely in a classical collaboration with viola virtuoso Yuri Bashmet and pianist Igor Raykhelson.

A man who's as tireless as his playing style, Butman is set to celebrate his 50th birthday the same month as Marsalis in October. A long night of executive jamming seems guaranteed.

—Michael Jackson



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Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra *Treelines*

JUSTIN TIME 8559

★★★★½

Treelines is a stunning orchestral debut on CD by Canadian composer and saxophonist Christine Jensen. Her sister Ingrid (whose trumpet and flugelhorn are featured liberally on the album) is probably better known to American audiences. After this, maybe not. The siblings hail from Nanaimo, British Columbia (also Diana Krall's hometown), but whereas Ingrid moved to New York, Christine went to Montreal, where she formed this lushly brassy orchestra in the 1990s. With a pastoral brush and organic sense of development recalling Maria Schneider, Jensen has created an integrated series of tone poems here, with names such as "Dancing Sunlight," "Arbutus," "Red Cedar" and "Western Yew," that unsentimentally evoke the grandeur and beauty of Jensen's beloved Canadian bush. Ingrid often glides aloft Christine's thick, warm washes of arching, interwoven lines. The composer is particularly good at plucking small combinations—clarinets, flutes, creatively-muted brass—from within the larger band to highlight her themes, often with a turbulent wave of counter-thematic material. Least things become too evanescent, her catchy riffs ensure continuous momentum. The mood may be misty, but the music is never vague. As with Schneider's work, solos are never decorative exhibitions, but push the narrative. Jensen also uses dynamics well, moving from cool, muted passages to sudden builds that waste no time getting where they're going. It's rare to hear long thoughts presented with such economy.

The aching, falling melody of



Christine Jensen

COURTESY JUSTIN TIME

the opener, "Dancing Sunlight," is a standout, with Jon Wikan's tippy-tappy brushes filling in the gaps of a stop'n'start line and tenor saxophonist Joel Miller fluttering through a solo. Great idea to kick off "Red Cedar" with Fraser Hollins' bass solo, and Ingrid's fat sound gliding over warm electric guitar and Erik Hove's Dolphyesque dancing adds yet more mystery. "Western Yew" conjures a sky of lightly drift-

ing clouds that carry a kind of sadness in their vapor, ending with a sigh. The pretty "Seafever" features Christine's soprano, with a nervous riff that reflects the mood of the title. "Vernal Suite" has a darker, more somber feel. But misty or dark, vaporous or igneous, there's something substantial and enticing on every track of this album, which promises—like the landscapes that inspired it—to reveal new secrets

with every listen. —Paul de Barros

Treelines: Dancing Sunlight; Arbutus; Red Cedar; Western Yew; Dropoff; Dark And Stormy Blues; Seafever; Vernal Suite. (74:05)

Personnel: Christine Jensen, conductor, soprano saxophone; Ingrid Jensen, trumpet, flugelhorn, piano (6); Jocelyn Couture, Bill Mahar, Aron Doyle, Dave Mossing, trumpet, flugelhorn; Donny Kennedy, alto saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute; Erik Hove, alto saxophone, flute; Joel Miller, tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute, clarinet; Chet Dexas, tenor saxophone, clarinet, flute; Sean Craig, baritone saxophone, clarinet; David Grott, Jean-Nicolas Trottier, David Martin, trombone; Bob Ellis, bass trombone; Steve Amiraault, piano; Ken Bibace, electric and acoustic guitar; Fraser Hollins, bass; Martin Auguste, drums; Jon Wikan, percussion.

Ordering info: justin-time.com

Charlie Haden Quartet West *Sophisticated Ladies*

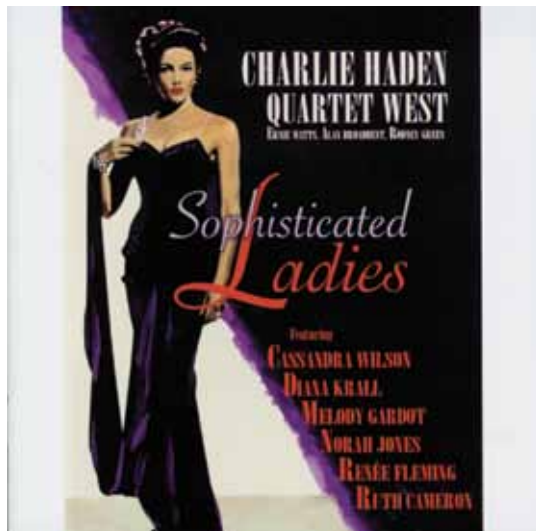
EMARCY 0015337

★★★★

The wild card in Charlie Haden's diverse deck is perhaps his tamest, the Quartet West. For 25 years it's been an evolving expression of his affinity for the softer, more ordered world of the standard—or more precisely the sensibility of the standard, since the group often reaches into the narrower halls of the “jazz standard.”

Beginning as a straight quartet around 1987, it took pleasure and inspiration in the past without losing its contemporary moorings. In the early '90s it created literal flashbacks, drifting in and out of sampled echoes of earlier recordings. By 1995 the retro references had become more oblique and inbred as pianist Alan Broadbent began scoring leisurely string accompaniments that have been part of the group's mix of movement and repose ever since. The next augmentation in 1999 was to invite in a guest singer or two, thus letting lyrics take their place in the group's commitment to lyricism. And there it stopped, until now.

Sophisticated Ladies is the sixth in the Quartet West cycle and extends the partnership with singers. Each submits to the CD's seductive, after-midnight concept, which adds



up to a Billy Strayhornish ennui laced with a slightly bruised, been-around-the-block repentance but ready for more. Melody Gardot sets the candlelit mood with a drowsy intimacy of whispered pillow talk. Cassandra Wilson has the distinction of introducing an unrecorded Johnny Mercer lyric on “My Love And I.” Opera diva Renée Fleming squeezes an aching despair out of “A Love Like This” that conjures images of a 37-year-old woman in red sitting in a First Avenue bar gazing into a Gibson—at 11 in the morning. Diana Krall's elegiac sighs saturate “Goodbye” with an expressive starkness and provide an explicit commentary at the end.

And I like Ruth Cameron's take on “Let's Call It A Day,” nowhere more than when she breaks musical stride in the last eight bars for an almost spoken “we know.” At every turn, Quartet West celebrates maturity, at any age.

All the singers get the emotional adrenaline of Broadbent's strings, except Norah Jones, who tackles “Ill Wind” with just the quartet. There's an almost rustic edge and tartness to her excellent reading that contrasts with the others' big-city languor. But with each offering only a single cameo, it's the concept that rules over any single star turn.

To further buffer any vocal contrasts, each singer is separated by an instrumental track from the quartet, either with or without string accompaniment. Here the music manages to wander off-message and uptempo from the relentlessly noirish melancholy. “Wahoo” and “Today I Am A Man,” an obscure Steve Kuhn tune that seems to be thinking “Giant Steps,” are both bracing, straightforward swingers. The title track is a lovely showcase for Ernie Watts that rouses itself in the second chorus. Pointedly grown-up with an almost literary elegance, Haden and partners understand the ties between jazz and cabaret.

—John McDonough

Sophisticated Ladies: If I'm Lucky; Sophisticated Lady; Ill Wind; Today I Am A Man; My Love And I; Theme From “Markham”; Let's Call It A Day; Angel Face; A Love Like This; My Old Flame; Goodbye; Wahoo. (49:31)

Personnel: Ernie Watts, tenor saxophone; Alan Broadbent, piano, string orchestrations (1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11); Charlie Haden, bass; Rodney Green, drums; Melody Gardot (1), Norah Jones (3), Cassandra Wilson (5), Ruth Cameron (7), Renee Fleming (9), Diana Krall (11), vocals.

Ordering info: emarcy.com

Fred Hersch *Alone At The Vanguard*

PALMETTO 2147

★★★★

Fred Hersch's art is often deemed erudite, consistently waxing heady while cultivating poetic filigree. Though I believe the pianist to be a romantic as well, I'm down with that designation. There's a regulatory side to Hersch's work that underscores the music's grace—seldom do you hear him forsaking authority, even when the heat of the creative moment vies for domination. That kind of control is perhaps best illustrated in his solo playing, where his music's exploratory nature is bolstered by a deep command of the instrument. On this live date from the Village Vanguard, Hersch strikes a remarkable balance between lyricism and supervision. He gives his muse plenty of leash, but demands that it act with logic and decorum.

How else to describe the lithe swirls of “Lee's Dream,” a piece that tilts post-bop ef-



fervescence towards both fugue and fantasia? In an engaging shell game of curt phrases, Hersch continually manipulates the melody. A nod to Lee Konitz, who himself likes to realign a wealth of motifs when reconstructing a tune, the pianist's performance is seductively fluid—another skill that consistently comes to the fore on this date. “Down Home,” an homage to Bill Frisell that also boasts a dollop of Abdullah Ibrahim, has a beguiling way of connecting the

dots between the theme and the solo. One second Hersch is in the middle of a jaunty extrapolation, the next he's back at the melody. Don't blink, because you'll miss the transition. It's a level of finesse that few pianists can claim.

Hersch the romantic pops up a couple of times during the set (which is presented as played on the last evening of six-night run). “Memories Of You” sports a terrific glide. Its tempo is ghostly, but its emotions are warm. The flutters that mark the intro of “In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning” also generate heat, giving way to a pointillist tale of dreamy desolation.

It's Thelonious Monk and Sonny Rollins who provide the pianist with more vigorous fare. “Work” is one of the most physical pieces on the disc, with an eau d'Art Tatum wafting by, and the blues of “Doxy” brings a bit of swagger to the table. You'll never hear Hersch pounding the keys, but there is a certain ardor floating through his abstractions, and it's one of his neatest tricks. The delicacy that's become his signature trait is always accompanied by an unmistakable depth.

—Jim Macnie

Alone At The Vanguard: In The Wee Small Hours Of The Morning; Down Home; Echoes; Lee's Dream; Pastorale; Doce De Coco; Memories Of You; Work; Encore: Doxy. (71:21)

Personnel: Fred Hersch, piano.

Ordering info: palmetto-records.com



Orrin Evans *Captain Black Big Band*

POSI-TONE 8078

★★★★½

As opposed to the emotional complexity of the Maria Schneider-school of neo-big-banders, the Captain Black Big Band goes straight for the listener's adrenaline center. Pianist Orrin Evans' band includes fellow Philadelphians and New Yorkers, and it's spotted with exciting names—trumpeter Jack Walrath, trombonist Frank Lacy—but isn't a marquee-conscious affair.

Instead, it's a hard-hitting, brassy springboard, catapulting soloists into high gear. Nothing much slow or slinky, the more forceful arrangements are generally uptempo and spotlight a few soloists, especially trumpeter Walter White, saxophonist Ralph Bowen and drummer Anwar Marshall. With taut, propulsive material, like the opener, drummer Ralph Peterson's "Art Of War," the blowing and maneuvering are rambunctious. Though nobody will be winning awards for innovation here, there's plenty of room for inventive play—listen to Jaleel Shaw's searing alto sax solo on "Jena 6."

Tunes like Evans' "Big Jimmy" evoke the Charles Mingus bands: muscular, featuring a heavy bottom end. Throughout the CD's recordings a handful of the bandmembers, leader included, seem to have listened to Miles Davis' *Kind Of Blue* so often that it's mutated their DNA. I could do without some of the quoting: White, for instance, digs into Handel's *Messiah*, an unnecessary reference. Amid all the rollercoaster riding, there's room for a stroll on "Captain Black," with Jim Holton soloing two-fistedly on piano; "Easy Now," also penned by Evans, has an almost Russian Romantic weight to it, with elephantine brass giving way to the most gentle moments on the disc.

—John Corbett

Captain Black Big Band: Art Of War; Here's The Captain; Inheritance; Big Jimmy; Captain Black; Easy Now; Jena 6. (59:54)

Personnel: Evans, Jim Holton, Neil Podgurski, piano; Mark Allen, Chelsea Baratz, Todd Bashore, Ralph Bowen, Wade Dean, Doug DeHays, Wayne Escoffery, Tia Fuller, Rob Landham, Victor North, Jaleel Shaw, Tim Warfield, Darryl Yokley, saxophones; Todd Marcus, bass clarinet; Luke Brandon, Daud EL-Bakara, Josh Evans, Tatum Greenblatt, Leon Jordan, Jr., Brian Kilpatrick, Curtis Taylor, Tim Thompson, Jack Walrath, Walter White, trumpets; Stafford Hunter, Frank Lacy, Joe McDonough, Ernest Stuart, Brent White, trombones; Mike Boone (1), Mark Przybylowski (3), Luques Curtis, bass; Donald Edwards (7), Gene Jackson (2, 6), Anwar Marshall, drums.

Ordering info: posi-tone.com

The Hot Box

	John McDonough	John Corbett	Jim Macnie	Paul de Barros
Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra <i>Treelines</i>	★★★	★★★★½	★★★★	★★★★½
Charlie Haden Quartet West <i>Sophisticated Ladies</i>	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★
Fred Hersch <i>Alone At The Vanguard</i>	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
Orrin Evans <i>Captain Black Big Band</i>	★★★★½	★★★★½	★★★★	★★½

Critics' Comments ▶

Christine Jensen Jazz Orchestra, *Treelines*

Cool, thoughtfully layered, contained without being cloistered, Jensen's wall-to-wall impressions offer no easy hooks. The "contrasts" she promises are camouflaged within often pensive blends that shift and stir with stately restraint. A pleasant façade, but the emotional center may take some time. —John McDonough

I appreciate the artistry of the new big-band scene, even if most of it doesn't thrill me. Jensen's ear for massed combinations and firm counterpoint—as composer and arranger—is acute and she's got a highly attuned bunch of Canadians to work with, so the craft-musicianship isn't an issue. *Treelines* is a showcase for older sis, who sounds luminous in this woody setting. —John Corbett

I've never heard her work previously, and I'm taken aback regarding its maturity and scope. Though it has a bit too much sentiment on its mind, the music is as provocative as it is graceful. It never makes leaps it can't pull off, yet it's leaping all the time. The ensemble unity helps sell the composer's vision. —Jim Macnie

Charlie Haden Quartet West, *Sophisticated Ladies*

Nothing original about the concept, so it's got to be about the execution. Very mixed bag, best parts of which are quartet only, strings adding a slinky (sometimes sappy) sheen, the vocals uneven from Wilson's earthen vulnerability and Fleming's hovering ethereality to lesser entries from Krall and Jones. —John Corbett

The ever-shifting program offers the right blend of vocals and instrumentals, though I'd like to have heard another uptempo item besides the closing "Wahoo." Of the singers, Krall and Jones seem most at home in their tenderness. Wilson brings the kind of delicate drama that can't be matched these days. —Jim Macnie

Much as I love Charlie Haden—including his forgivably unabashed sentimentality about '50s romantic schmaltz—this album's a dog. It can't seem to make up its mind between dreamy string settings for gauzy vocals by the crème de la crème (Diana, Norah, Cassandra) and workmanlike instrumentals. Ironically, the leader's wife, Ruth Cameron, whose presence would normally generate sarcasm on a project like this, delivers the clearest track. —Paul de Barros

Fred Hersch, *Alone At The Vanguard*

Hersch's final set at the Vanguard is to barroom piano what Sinatra's "Angel Eyes" is to saloon singing. Easy to undervalue, maybe, because it's so intimate, cozy and touchable. But the keyboard is home to Hersch and he unwinds here with the wise, unforced ease of a master raconteur. Just another late set, but special enough. —John McDonough

Quite an honor, being first to play a week unaccompanied at the Vanguard. Nobody deserves it more, and makes better on the opportunity than Hersch. His playing is witty, sly, turbulent, dark, bright, complex, straightforward, charming, analytic, emotional. An inspired set, realistically recorded with all the bumps and clinks of a night in the club. Intelligent, deeply human music. —John Corbett


Sometimes letting it all hang out isn't such a great idea. Hersch's gushing nod to 19th century romantic piano music, complete with trills, tremolos and swimmy arpeggios, doesn't showcase him at his best, though he comes to his senses on Monk's "Work," digging in deep and dark, following his ears, not his sentiments. —Paul de Barros

Orrin Evans, *Captain Black Big Band*


Better rated on a Richter scale than a star system. Slugs and swings its way through a set that seldom sleeps. Best writing is the title cut with its burly, relaxed reeds. Soloists push back with over-the-top intensity, none more than Jaleel Shaw. Stirring in its sprawl and power, but could use more focus. —John McDonough

There's something old-fashioned about this band and this performance, and, oddly, it's refreshing. Perhaps it's the sense of bravura that's floating between the lines, or maybe the dedication to a more orthodox swing language than few big bands are using these days. —Jim Macnie

Gritty, muscular, soulful and a little rough around the edges, this aggregation feels more like a setup for macho solos in an enthusiastic live setting than a band with an idea, though "Big Jimmy" and "Captain Black" showcase some smart writing and trumpeters Walter White and Tatum Greenblatt sparkle. —Paul de Barros



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Omar Sosa *Calma*

OTA 1022

★★★★½

Consisting of 13 tracks, all of them improvised, *Calma* is multi-instrumentalist Omar Sosa's fifth solo piano recording. *Calma* lives up to its title, the music meditative and ruminative, with most tracks hovering around four minutes in length. All in all, the album is bound to bring a little serenity to any typically frazzled 21st century music listener.

Sosa, forgoing the surprises that might come from virtuosic expression, opts to just let the music float, confident in his abilities to express himself on the piano. And it is a "day" that we are treated to, with the opening, slowly stirring "Sunrise" bringing along 11 elegies before ending with, not surprisingly, the soothing, simple, dreamy "Sunset." It is improvisation, but, maybe because of the slow pace to each tune, there is a composed feel to each one of them—the forms simple in spontaneous design, the structures easy to divine. Instead of pacing, from uptempo to medium-tempo to balladic song forms and back again, the listener can expect to just cruise along, modal track to modal track, as if floating gently in a rowboat.

One of the interesting aspects to Sosa's live-in-the-studio approach is the way he's able to periodically combine other elements, including Fender Rhodes, and various electronic effects



and sampled sounds. Their presences tend to be subtle, augmenting the more slightly brocaded piano musings, musings expressed more through chords than single lines. "Aguas," one of the few lively pieces on *Calma*, combines an actual pulse in 3 with percussive elements and what sounds like the voices of children.

"Looking Within" is another one with a series of soft chords that lead into subdued electronic effects that lend a slight edge, keeping things a bit off-kilter with moments of the unexpected. "Oasis," on the other hand, is built around a combination of chords and single lines in a kind of counterpoint to quiet electronic pings that irradiate outward into the acoustics of the piano.

The notes indicate that *Calma* is jazz with classical, ambient and electronica overtones. That might be an inclusive description, but, apart from some of the more lively yet still gentle excursions on a song like "Esperanza," the modus operandi feels and sounds more like new age music, more akin to George Winston than Keith Jarrett. Not terribly original in scope or execution, *Calma* still retains a significant patina of musical worth, because it is creative, designed to bring peace and some moments of reflection.

—John Ephland

Calma: Sunrise; Absence; Walking Together; Esperanza; Innocence; Oasis; Aguas; Looking Within; Dance Of Reflection; Autumn Flowers; Reposo; Madre; Sunset. (50:57)

Personnel: Omar Sosa, piano, Fender Rhodes electric piano, electronic effects.

Ordering info: melodia.com

Matthew Shipp *The Art Of The Improviser*

THIRSTY EAR 57197

★★★★½

At age 50, Matthew Shipp confirms that he is one of the best pianists of his generation. On this live two-disc set, he revisits some of his most riveting compositions as well as provides new perspectives on a couple of standards. The package, a date featuring his new trio and a solo performance, also makes *The Art Of The Improviser* an ideal entry point into Shipp's discography.

On the first disc, Shipp is supported in his endeavors by drummer Whit Dickey, a longtime collaborator of his, and bass player Michael Bisio, a more recent ally. With his busy shuffle and barrage of shimmering cymbals, Dickey is the real anchor, while the polymorphous Bisio aptly applies the many techniques in his arsenal to follow the pianist and, most importantly, to push him to take greater chances. Both get an opportunity to stretch, and their meaningful



and imaginative solos act as pivotal points in the program.

Few pianists can mix swing, angularity and dissonance with Shipp's poise and aplomb. He negotiates with ease and nimbleness the many twists and turns he challenges himself with. Without his cohorts, Shipp is no less impressive, but he tends to be more ethereal and reflective. His treatments

evoke classical forms to surprising results; the jazz elements are downplayed to give the compositions an even greater elegance.

Both sets are presented as massive suites. The pieces are developed with stunning ingenuity in order to seamlessly segue into the next. Consequently, one witnesses the unfolding of a monumental work that befits a musician who deserves a place of choice in the jazz piano pantheon.

—Alain Drouot

The Art Of The Improviser: Disc 1: The New Fact; 3 In 1; Circular Temple Number 1; Take The "A" Train; Virgin Complex. (52:15) Disc 2: 4-D; Fly Me To The Moon; Wholotone; Module; Gamma Ray; Patmos. (38:59)

Personnel: Matthew Shipp, piano; Michael Bisio, bass (disc 1); Whit Dickey, drums (disc 1).

Ordering info: thirstyear.com

Brad Mehldau *Live In Marciac*

NONESUCH 520275

★★★★½

It's taken a few years, but we finally have a live solo piano performance that matches Keith Jarrett's epic *Köln Concert* in every measure. The similarities between Jarrett's 1975 masterpiece and Brad Mehldau's double-disc *Live In Marciac* are unmistakable: the limitless imagination, the technical virtuosity, the sheer physicality of maintaining a peak of performance over a long period. But the differences are obvious, the most important being that both pianists emerge as distinctive artists, each in his own way supreme in this most challenging format.

But enough, for now, of Jarrett; Mehldau is served best not through comparison but through appreciation of his own formidable accomplishment. His recital consists of individual pieces, combining his compositions with other works whose diversity alone is intriguing. It's tempting to suggest that the material itself isn't the point, that *Live In Marciac* celebrates the performance. One of the great accomplishments of this album is that Mehldau does honor the composition. It's easy to be blown away by his dazzling hand indepen-



dence and vast scope. But there is a lot more going on here than power for its own sake.

That force usually expresses itself through steady repetition of chords or individual notes. These can change in seconds from delicate tinkles to volcanic roars; sometimes they stop but they always leave in their wake an urgent rhythm—maintained through intricate counterpoint, seemingly abstract flurries and other means. With the exception of “Trailer Park Ghosts,” which Mehldau begins with a kind of boom-chuck swing feel, these pulses manifest as unsyncopated eighth-notes, which are the heart of Mehldau's rhythm. The formula works at all tempos: When he segues from the elegiac “Goodbye Storyteller (For Fred Myrow)” into

Radiohead's “Exit Music (For A Film),” the pulse becomes the dominant element. Mehldau uses it to anchor huge dynamic contrasts, pushing hard to the point of overdriving the mid-range strings and thundering in the bass. Moments later, it travels up toward the higher octaves and evokes a gently tapped bell. The listener alternatively is pushed by ferocious intensity and then pulled in by a bewitching fragility.

This concept works more subtly but with equal effect at slower tempos. “Resignation” boils down to three parts: a gentle quarter-note pulse on the tonic, a few lines appearing and receding around that pulse, and a long, fleet improvisation in the upper range. Arguably, these right-hand fireworks are filigree around what Mehldau creates with his left. Similarly, he does “Secret Love” as a very slow ballad with the changes played on top of all four beats per bar. Straight repetition is again embedded in the foundation, but here it establishes the effect of a mournful trudge—which, to get back to the point of Mehldau as an interpreter, mirrors the lyric with an insight that few players have achieved.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Live In Marciac: Disc One: Storm; It's All Right with Me; Secret Love; Unrequited; Resignation; Trailer Park Ghost; Goodbye Storyteller (For Fred Myrow); Exit Music (for a Film). (61:19). Disc Two: Things Behind the Sun; Lithium; Lilac Wine; Martha My Dear; My Favorite Things; Dat Dere. (40:31)

Personnel: Brad Mehldau, piano.

Ordering info: nonesuch.com



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Kermit Driscoll *Reveille*

19/8 1015

★★★★

Bassist and perennial sideman Kermit Driscoll has built an impressive resume. It begins alongside guitarist Bill Frisell, and over the course of a quarter-century, branches out to Chet Baker, John Zorn, the New York Philharmonic, even David Johansen. *Reveille* marks Driscoll's first album as a leader. With Frisell in the fold, Driscoll cedes some of the spotlight to his longtime colleague, whose presence reinforces Driscoll's own penchant for eclecticism.

The 10 tracks draw from blues, country music and free-jazz; the strangely titled "Hekete" manages to incorporate all three. The opening track, "Boomstatz," presents a guitar power trio that gradually gains momentum from Driscoll and drummer Vinnie Colaiuta. "Thank You" adds pianist Kris Davis to the fray and again spotlights Frisell. He creates a chaotic jolt from a battery of effects over Driscoll's deep electric bass grooves.

"For Hearts" is unapologetically bluesy and features a true ensemble approach; it's one of the album's highlights. Using a clean tone, Frisell accompanies Davis and then sits out as Driscoll takes over the accompanist's role; then Frisell solos while Davis sits out, and then Colaiuta solos over a vamp from the other three musicians. The tunes typically start at one point and wind up in a much different place. But the album would have benefited from a stronger blueprint.

—Eric Fine

Reveille: Boomstatz; Thank You; For Hearts; Chicken Reel; Ire; Hekete; Great Expectations; Farm Life; Martin Sklar; Raveille. (62:15)

Personnel: Kermit Driscoll, bass; Bill Frisell, guitar; Kris Davis, piano; Vinnie Colaiuta, drums.

Ordering info: nineteeneight.com



Joel Harrison *String Choir: The Music Of Paul Motian*

SUNNYSIDE 1273

★★★★

Guitarist Joel Harrison's latest group of arrangements—Paul Motian tunes arranged for string quartet and two guitars—belongs in a gray area between classical and jazz. This isn't simply jazz with strings, the subgenre that once bewitched Charlie Parker; Harrison's record leans more toward classical music, but it's certainly not the jazz-as-classical mishmash more recently explored by Wynton Marsalis.

The tunes cover a wide range of Motian's career. "It Should Have Happened A Long Time Ago" begins with a mournful conversation between cello and violin on top of an ethereal guitar landscape. Dynamics roll up and down, and tempos fluctuate, but the piece retains its languid quality, the instruments constantly pushing and pulling against each other.

On "Drum Song," the musicians saw on their strings and bang on the cavities of their instruments. Harrison's version of Thelonious Monk's "Misterioso"—included in the album because Motian often plays the number with his trio—is a dissonant fog with a pizzicato melody.

Harrison takes this heady music and creates string compositions that demand an active, engaged listener. *String Choir* is a tribute record to a jazz heavyweight, but it could also stand on its own on the classical rack.

—Jon Ross

String Choir: It Should Have Happened A Long Time Ago; Drum Music; Cathedral Song; Misterioso; Mode VI; Owl Of Cranston; Jade Visions; Split Decision; Etude; Mumbo Jumbo; Conception Vessel; From Time To Time. (55:14)

Personnel: Joel Harrison, guitar; Liberty Ellman, guitar; Christian Howes, violin; Sam Bardfeld, violin; Mat Maneri, viola; Peter Urgan, viola; Dana Leong, cello.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com



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Christine Sullivan *Away*

FUSE
★★½

Many a contemporary singer-songwriter has stood before the mountains of Joni Mitchell and Van Morrison and mistakenly thought their jagged terrains could be easily scaled. Australian vocalist Christine Sullivan is among those legions. She's offered up something of an amorphous hodgepodge here. You'll hear folk, trance, world music, jazz, a little new age and some of the quasi-spiritual modality so popular in the '70s.

Save for Mitchell's "River," Sullivan works with her own material. She's not much for chord changes or melodic movement, and these pieces just sort of float on static sound planes. Except for some percussive tinkering by David James on "Quiet Now" and "Black Crow," there's not a great deal for the musicians to do. They provide backgrounds and mostly just passively stir the pot.

Sullivan has an intimate voice and her delivery is half-sung, half-spoken. If she's not cooing wordlessly ("Oestre") or whispering recitation ("Murdunna"), her vocals just sort of meander along—most of these selections have inconclusive endings. "River" is the most challenging vehicle, and pianist Andy Milne's tender-yet-pointed contributions elevate the whole album, albeit briefly. It shows that given worthy material, Sullivan could make a much more effective statement.

—Kirk Silsbee

Away: Oestre; Quiet Now; Shadowlands; Black Crow; Murdunna; River; Away; God Is Like Skin. (44:23)
Personnel: Christine Sullivan, vocals; Tony Buchanan, soprano saxophone, flute; Craig Ross, guitar, sonic treatment; Andy Milne, piano (6); Evri Evripidou, electric bass; David James, percussion.

Ordering info: fusemusic.com.au



Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet *To Hear From There*

PATOIS RECORDS 012

★★★★

On To Hear From There, Wayne Wallace pays his respects to the history of Latin jazz with contemporary versions of standards while also turning in a half-dozen originals in a variety of rhythmic styles.

Wallace has a knack for catchy melodies and a firm understanding of the rhythms behind the genre, but he's not afraid to push the music. "Serafina Del Caribe" goes for a brassy trombone choir sound with the addition of trombonists Jeff and Natalie Cressman and Dave Martell. Wallace throws out the mute for the melody and goes back into dance-hall mode.

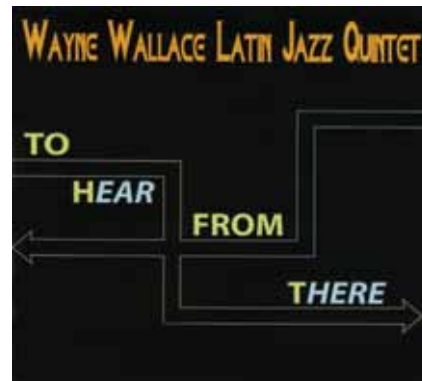
Tito Puente's "Philadelphia Mambo" is a bit conspicuous with its avant-garde piano intro and frenetic drum solo. Vocalist Kenny Washington is a nice addition to the mambo "Perdido." He gives the melody a light, breezy reading and adds a few scat choruses in the middle. The accompaniment on the disc is an immovable machine composed of capable soloists who gel together to create a solid rhythmic backdrop.

—Jon Ross

To Hear From There: La Escuela; Serafina Del Caribe; Perdido; Los Gatos; Descarga En Blue; Oguere (Soul Of The Earth); Lament; The Peanut Vendor (El Manicero); Yemaya (The Seven Seas); Bebo Ya Llego; Philadelphia Mambo. (63:34)

Personnel: Wayne Wallace, trombone, Wagner tuba, vocals; Murray Low, piano, vocals; David Belove, bass, vocals; Paul van Wageningen, trap drums, vocals; Michael Spiro, percussion, vocals; Kenny Washington, vocal; Bobi Cespedes, vocal; Jeff Cressman, Natalie Cressman, Dave Martell, trombone.

Ordering info: patoisrecords.com



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—John Corbett, *Downbeat* (4 1/2 stars)

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Gerald Clayton
Bond: The Paris Sessions

EMARCY 15393

★★★★★

Young up-and-comers can find no better source than Gerald Clayton and his colleagues for learning what it means to listen as they play, to catch the right ideas that fly your way and let them trigger a response.

But batting licks or rhythmic bits back and forth is volleyball, not invention; the best groups are those who launch their explorations from a foundation that itself is distinctive. For pianist Clayton, bassist Joe Sanders and drummer Justin Brown, that brand boils down to several elements that crop up frequently throughout *Bond: The Paris Sessions*.

One of these involves the use of two- or three-chord statements that function as touchstones during extended improvisations, with the last one settled on the tonic. One such motif kicks off "If I Were A Bell," thus establishing a rhythmic structure that guides all three musicians through the tune, from a dreamy beginning into a crescendo.

During these latter sections of the tune, another device employed on the album makes itself heard. As the interplay heats up, Clayton begins playing another three-note figure to serve essentially as mile markers on their journey.



These figures, which end on a simply voiced I chord, flag cadences that cue the artists—and listeners—as to where one episode of improvisation might end or transform into the next. On "Bond: The Cast," "Major Hope" and "Bond: Fresh Squeeze," this device also provides a reference point during passages of metrical complexity, more or less to help identify where the downbeat is after a few bars of, say, 15/8 on "Major Hope."

Clayton plays with consistent fluency, emphasizing subtle dynamics and single right-hand lines that blaze scenic paths through sophisticated changes. Brown's drumming is empathetic and understated; he plays texturally at every tempo, casting vivid colors through his cymbal work. When his solo moment comes at the top of "Snake Bite," he lays down ominous scuttles and rattles consistent with the title's implications. Sanders is equally expressive, guiding the way through complex changes in "Sun Glimpse." With these and many more examples of intelligent collective creation, it's a delight to close with "Bond: Burn," the only flat-out post-bop sizzler on the album.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Bond: The Paris Sessions: If I Were A Bell; Bond: The Cast; Bootleg Bruise; Major Hope; Bond: Fresh Squeeze; Snake Bite; Sun Glimpse; Which Persons; 3D; Nobody Else But Me; All the Things You Are; Bond: The Release; Shout and Cry; Round Come Round; Hank; Bond: Burn (Hidden Track) (67:31)

Personnel: Gerald Clayton, piano; Joe Sanders, bass; Justin Brown, drums.

Ordering info: emarcy.com

Gordon Goodwin's
Big Phat Band
That's How We Roll

TELARC 32363

★★★★½

This collection serves as a culmination of Gordon Goodwin's decade of leading his ambitious big band. Having beaten the survival odds for jazz orchestras, don't count on it to serve as the Big Phat Band's ultimate statement. The decade has shown that Goodwin's vocabulary and ability to attract first-rate players just keep expanding.

The Phat Band has so much soloist firepower that it's a tribute to Goodwin's composition and orchestration skills that the tunes aren't overshadowed by the instrumental voices. The ensemble delights include the gauzy reed voicings of the pastoral "Everlasting," the 16-jewel-movement precision of "Rippin' n Runnin'"; the gorgeous trombone choruses of "It's Not Polite To Point," the reed and brass labyrinth of "Gaining On You," the unison trumpet glisses on the title cut, the Latin funk of "Howdiz Songo?" and a stunning reconfiguring of "Rhapsody In Blue."

In the tradition of the many "Martian" compositions by Shorty Rogers, "Hunting Wabbits



3" is the latest in Goodwin's ongoing work in the animated cartoon soundtrack format. Full of tension and Raymond Scott-like tight turns, it's executed with precision. Unlike Scott, Goodwin provides swinging respites to relieve the tension.

Saxophonists

Eric Marienthal and Brian Scanlon update and up the ante on the Two Hot Franks (Frank Foster and Frank Wess) duels of the old Count Basie band on "Race To The Bridge." Koz and Albright are seldom heard on anything as complex as "Rippin'," and Marcus Miller's elastic bass animates "Never Enough." Anything this great calls for at least 10 more years.

—Kirk Silsbee

That's How We Roll: That's How We Roll; Howdiz Songo?; Rippin' n Runnin'; Hunting Wabbits 3 (Get Off My Lawn); Everlasting; Gaining On You; Never Enough; It's Not Polite To Point; Race To The Bridge; Rhapsody In Blue. (65:19)

Personnel: Wayne Bergeron, Dan Formero, Bob Summers, Dan Savant, Willie Murillo, trumpets; Eric Marienthal, Sal Lozano, Kevin Garren, Brian Scanlon, Jeff Driskill, Jay Mason, saxophones, flutes, clarinets; Andy Martin, Charlie Morillas, Francisco Torres, Craig Ware, Craig Gosnell, trombones; Gordon Goodwin, piano, tenor saxophone; Andrew Synowiec, guitar; Rick Shaw, basses; Bernie Dresel, drums; Brad Dutz, percussion; Take 6, vocals (7); Dave Koz, Gerald Albright, alto saxophone (3); Marcus Miller, electric bass (7).

Ordering info: telarc.com



Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Del McCoury

Crescent City Celebrations

Preservation Hall Jazz Band and Del McCoury Band: *American Legacies* (Preservation Hall Recordings and McCoury Music 0015; 46:10; ★★★★★) What the Preservation Hall Band is currently doing for traditional New Orleans jazz, Del McCoury started doing a decade ago for bluegrass; without altering the spirit of either early 20th century art form, both groups have successfully updated and broadened the audiences for their music. That similarity is secondary to the seamless marriage of banjo, brass, breakdowns and polyphonic improvisation that layer this swinging romp. On "Banjo Frisco," McCoury's picked melody is punctuated by a sexy, growling horn line and shares solo-trading duties with Mark Braud's bright-toned trumpet. McCoury's "50/50 Chance" highlights the rhythmic intersections of American roots music, as a sousaphone holds down the bottom of a bouncing country anthem about lost love.

Ordering info: preservationhallmerch.com

Nicholas Payton: *Bitches* (self-release; 45:62; ★★★★★) Oozing with neo-soul concepts and thick with Prince references, Nicholas Payton's first foray into serious vocals was, as its Miles Davis-esque title suggests, a musical risk, and he's made every track available online. The material is a logical progression from *Into The Blue* and *Sonic Trance*, which dealt with many of the same r&b and soul fusion ideas that drew the trumpeter away from the clean, cerebral musings of his neo-bop past. In a series of tunes whose dynamism is based more on vocal than instrumental parts, Payton paints a picture of the lifespan of a relationship, complete with smitten joy, confusion, emotional murkiness and regret. Other than guest vocalists like Cassandra Wilson and Esperanza Spalding, Payton played and produced every note. A more swinging solo introduces the title track, and the punchy, harmonic refrain balances Payton's extended rhyme sequences. But on tracks like "iStole Your iPhone," his lyrical cheekiness

just doesn't mesh with his winding, horn-like vocal melodies.

Ordering info: mediafire.com/?e8urfrvjbkt502

Neslort: *Mystical Scam* (Threadhead/Lort Records; THR 00011; 55:61; ★★★★★) Although it would be impossible to talk about trombonist Rick Trolsen's jazz-rock amalgam without invoking some reference to Frank Zappa, his latest effort is as rooted in the New Orleans experience as Zappa's approach was entrenched in sarcasm. "Blues For Man's Extinction" drives that point home with lyrics bemoaning, "Oil in the Gulf/wetlands are sinking/beaches are covered with tar." But as the sextet races through apocalyptic soundscapes ("Picture"), wonky funk inspirations ("The Noise") and hooky keyboard jams ("Bedwetting For Example"), they seem intent on twisting the city's dance-oriented musical traditions into complexities better suited to unraveling with grey matter than with a shake of the old tail-feather.

Ordering info: threadheadrecords.com

Various Artists: *Nine Lives: A Musical Adaptation, Vol. 1* (Mystery Street Records 0001; 44:01/45:04; ★★★★★) This wrenching adaptation of journalist Dan Baum's book about nine intersecting New Orleanian lives spanning Hurricanes Betsy through Katrina represents the sound of the city in a way that's never been tried before. Screenwriter Colman deKay teamed up with Cowboy Mouth front man Paul Sanchez (and on many tracks, vocalist John Boutte) to retell the story. The story is not an easy one to tell, rendering numbers like the emotion-drenched opener, "Fine In The Lower Nine," more compelling than the tongue-in-cheek "King Of Mardi Gras." The theatricality of the latter, with its harpsichord and booming Harry Shearer contribution, would border on cloying without the context of the full album. But the scope of the project is so impressive that combing through the story lines becomes part of the fun. **DB**

Ordering info: mysterystreetrecords.com





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Terrell Stafford *This Side Of Strayhorn*

MAXJAZZ 408

★★★★★

Terrell Stafford brings more than just a good bebop quartet to bear on this suite of the known and perhaps less known Billy Strayhorn songbook. A versatile and deeply rooted musician, he is comfortably literate in a range of performance spanning Cootie Williams through Clifford Brown. Without breaking any special ground, Tim Warfield, his partner on tenor, has sketched a string of supportive outlines and directions that complement the players and composer.

Stafford is not the sort of player who would seem to leap out of a crowd of players with a signature calling card. But he has the steadying hand of a good anchoring sound and can turn sharply tart or broadly lyrical as needed. He also has a relaxed, unforced attack that rolls through a chorus with assurance—qualities which may bring deserved attention Stafford's way.

He makes some broad leaps of tone and emotional latitude in the program. His flugelhorn brings a stoical and impassive containment to "Lush Life," even as he lightens the existen-



tial bleakness toward the end. He then switches to a fiercely passionate plunger sound on "Multicolored Blue," a straight 12-bar blues originally written for Johnny Hodges. Stafford replaces Hodges' moonbeams with fiery grimaces, dark growls and climbing ascents. Warfield complements with a tenor turn at his most Ben Websterish.

"Lana Turner" gets its first American recording here, though its opening phrase is a familiar blues break that Strayhorn fashioned into the 32-bar song heard here. Stafford's open trumpet solo builds with an Armstrong-like sense of catharsis. Then, on the other side of Armstrong, we end with a bebop run through "Johnny Come Lately." Tempos shuffle about with a lively suddenness, and pianist Bruce Barth riffs briefly on "So What" behind Warfield's swirling soprano sax. Barth, incidentally, contributes strong, hard swinging piano solo work at every opportunity.

—John McDonough

This Side Of Strayhorn: Raincheck; Smada; My Little Brown Book; Lush Life; Multicolored Blue; U.M.M.G.; Lana Turner; Day Dream; Johnny Come Lately. (69:50)

Personnel: Terrell Stafford, trumpet, flugelhorn; Tim Warfield, soprano and tenor saxophone; Bruce Barth, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Dana Hall, drums.

Ordering info: maxjazz.com

JD Allen Trio *Victory!*

SUNNYSIDE 1280

★★★★★

On its third album for Sunnyside and fifth overall, the JD Allen Trio's muscular and cogent approach to saxophone trio jazz is both new and very familiar. With echoes of John Coltrane's trio sides for Atlantic and Sonny Rollins' regular visits to this form, *Victory!* also propels itself into more contemporary territory a la Joe Lovano and Branford Marsalis. Allen's burly tenor roams with hefty support from the punctilious Gregg August on bass and Rudy Royston on drums.

This trio seems to specialize, at least on record, in brief, in-and-out statements, the music hovering somewhere between song forms and the line between mainstream and free-jazz. (The longest piece, "The Pilot's Compass," is only five minutes in length.) Atonality is on the outskirts of this music, but never an assumed guest. Rhythm, while a factor, tends to float around a pulse more often than not, as on the meandering, solemn and open-ended "Philippe Petit," which ends abruptly. Then there's the rapid-fire swinger "Motif" that begins with Allen and Royston starting things off with August joining in later



in the spirit (if not manner) of any number of Coltrane's escapades with Elvin Jones and Jimmy Garrison or Paul Chambers. "Mr. Sleepy" (while not a blues) is played in the spirit of "Chasin' The Trane." When you think you've heard it all, the trio comes up with a serene, true-to-form take of "Stairway To The Stars," showcasing Allen's gift for

melodic invention and the band's natural ease with a slow approach. Just under two-and-a-half minutes, "Stars" serves as a kind of respite from the more wide-open, unexpected plains of everything else.

Victory! also includes a documentary film short by director Mario Lathan. "A collection of short pieces to make one sound." That's Allen talking about his music, expressed in both playing shots and verbal forms on this DVD as he tries to communicate his clearly passionate approach to music-making. The film is put together in "sonata form" but is really just like the music Allen plays: short and to the point. For fans of no-frills jazz, *Victory!* scores.

—John Ephland

Victory!: Victory!; The Pilot's Compass; The Thirsty Ear; Sura Hinda; The Learned Tongue; Philippe Petit; Motif; Fatima; Mr. Sleepy; Stairway To The Stars; The Hungry Eye; Recapitulation (The Pilot's Compass). (36:46)

Personnel: JD Allen, tenor saxophone; Gregg August, bass; Rudy Royston, drums.

Ordering info: sunnysiderecords.com

Stevie Ray Vaughan (left) and Albert King



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Dennis Taylor: *Steppin' Up* (Kizyboosh 2001; 76:42 ★★★★★) Situated smack dab in that stylistic place uniting jazz and blues, Taylor's debut album of originals and wisely chosen covers goes beyond the nuts and bolts of a typical sax-organ-drums session. The John Coltrane- and Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis-influenced tenor player—who died soon after finishing this last year—improvises with swinging confidence and trawls deep into the blues feeling he became familiar with as a sideman with Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown and Mighty Sam McClain. Traveling musically and emotionally, Taylor visits his old stomping grounds in New Orleans—"Lee's Lick" (his parading homage to Lee Allen), Dr. John's hoodoo-psychedelic "Gilded Splinters" and the Fats Domino-Dave Bartholomew shuffle "Josephine." With a commanding ease, he locates new melodic and tonal wrinkles in r&b master Percy Mayfield's "The River's Invitation" and in the evergreen "Since I Fell For You" (the one track here with a singer, his last bandleader, Delbert McClinton). The Vermont native lends beauty to Lennon & McCartney's "And I Love Her," putting a serious lump in the listener's throat. Grooves are furnished by adequate organist Kevin McKendree and three different drummers.

Ordering info: bigsisterproductions.com

Albert King & Stevie Ray Vaughan: *In Session* (Stax 31839; CD 63:53/DVD 88:00 ★★★★★) Two remarkable guitarists—one a soul-blues institution and the other a 29-year-old follower with a best-selling debut out on Epic—have a fine ol' time in an Ontario television studio in 1983. White-hot flames rage, subside and rage again as they lob grenade after grenade into impromptu arrangements of King's repertory staple "Blues At Sunrise," Vaughan's "Pride & Joy" and five more. Their respect for each other is palpable. King, often

testy and approachable, endorses Little Stevie as a "pretty good" musician—a huge compliment. Sadly, Vaughan didn't live long enough to become King's successor. The repackaging of the original album adds a DVD of the television show seen at the time along with a good chunk of film never before available to the public.

Ordering info: concordmusicgroup.com

Biscuit Miller: *Blues With A Smile* (Blue-bass 10; 52:49 ★★½) Indianapolis singer-bassist Miller, a practicing optimist who worked a long time with Chicago guitarist Lonnie Brooks, projects overtones of blues, funk and soul that lend unstudied conviction to a program of a dozen original tunes. He's a real crowd-pleaser, quick with sensual come-ons, as on the metaphor-feast "Butter My Biscuits" and the dreamy, tender-hearted "Blow A Kiss." His deepest plunge into hard-core, non-smiling blues is "Never Seen It Coming," where his vocal is equaled in force and poignancy by the electric guitar of Bobby Wilson. Joined by a choir, Miller stomps his way to gospel ecstasy in "Sing For The People." He should make a full album of exciting worship music.

Ordering info: biscuitmiller.com

Quinn Sullivan: *Cyclone* (GBG Records 1001; 39:59 ★★½) Who's this? The pint-size Justin Bieber of blues and blues-rock guitar? That's unfair. The 11-year-old protege of Buddy Guy gets the notes right with unfaked spirit on his first record, though his sky-high singing voice has yet to reach its full maturity. But the young Bostonian is extremely fortunate to have award-winning producer-songwriter Tom Hambridge in charge. Hambridge's lyrics generally concern the kid's love of guitars and blues, no two-timing women brooded over here. You Know Who shows up as the guest guitarist on "Buddy's Blues."

DB

Ordering info: quinnssullivan.me

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Colin Vallon Trio *Rruga*

ECM 2185

★★★★½

The dirge-like qualities of the opening songs of the Colin Vallon Trio's *Rruga* (their debut) and the way they are structured suggest the endings of songs rather than songs in their typical entirety. This may have something to do with the material's modal forms, the limited uses of melodic invention or hooks, and the musicians' apparent emphasis toward feeling and mood more than movement, per se.

It helps to know that this trio is Swiss, and that Switzerland is close to the Scandinavian countries that are responsible for so much in the way of grey, dark and oftentimes beautiful music. But being from this part of the continent doesn't always mean the same; think fellow labelmates in the Marcin Wasilewski Trio, whose music edges more towards Bill Evans, John Taylor, Keith Jarrett and Paul Bley even, in its resonances with song form. No, Vallon's trio seems to be playing the music that comes before we get to places more often visited, like "Everything I Love" and "Plaza Real." Like another labelmate, pianist Nik Bartsch, Vallon appears to be more interested in forms and the elements that make for a truly composed piece of music. The notion of improvisation and so-



los taking a back seat, *Rruga* is more about vignettes and dynamics, shadings and the sounds of the instruments themselves.

Every track, in its own way, spells this out. Despite the use of just three instruments and limited emotional range, each piece somehow manages to be different than

the one that preceded it. There are the more softly driven, backbeat-oriented tunes, where rhythm plays more of a part, as with bassist Patrice Moret's "Telepathy" and Vallon's title piece. But the most enchanting stuff comes as those tunes give way to the more ethereal ones, like Vallon's haunting "Home" and the mysterious "Eyjafjallajökull." This is an album where, excepting drummer Samuel Rohrer's "Polygonia" and Vallon's "Meral" and the more terrestrial, rock flavorings of "Rruga, var.," the music tends to go from a kind of morning fog just above the ground to something more elevated, seemingly weightless as it heads skyward. The players—with Vallon's more methodical, chordal approach, Moret's subtle, insistent bottom and Rohrer's alternately snappy and subdued percussion—blend particularly well together.

—John Epland

Rruga: Telepathy; Rruga; Home; Polygonia; Eyjafjallajökull; Meral; Iskar; Noreia; Rruga, var.; Fjord; Epilog. (53:50)

Personnel: Colin Vallon, piano; Patrice Moret, bass; Samuel Rohrer, drums.

Ordering info: ecmrecords.com

Scott Hamilton/ Rossano Sportiello *Midnight At NOLA's Penthouse*

ARBORS JAZZ 19415

★★★★★

It is the most intimate, naked duo setting in jazz, and when the tenor saxophonist and pianist are well matched, magic can happen.

That kind of magic is so consistent on this set of duets that it seems that veteran saxophonist Scott Hamilton and Italian pianist Rossano Sportiello are residing in some sort of rare state of grace. Their energy levels and touch on their instruments are absolutely in sync, and they handle both ballads and uptempo songs with equal facility.

Throughout his career, Hamilton often has seemed like a man standing in opposition to progress, but here he proves himself a timeless master of the subtle gesture and the perfectly placed note. His breathy vibrato and slightly hoarse tone sound like they're made to order for love songs like Sammy Kahn's "Wonder Why" and the extraordinarily gentle "A Garden In The Rain." Like Sonny Rollins, Hamilton sustains a bare refrain by creating in the listen-



er a sense that the next step is both logical and totally unknown. The suspense is lush, and so the release of emotion breaks like a giant wave. Sportiello's light hands and balanced playing provide ideal accompaniment, never rushing things, notes falling in all the right places. On faster pieces like Rodgers and Hart's "This Can't Be Love" and Louis

Armstrong's swaggering "Big Butter And Egg Man," Sportiello displays the technique that made his reputation as an inheritor of the stride tradition.

As good as the playing is, the material on *Midnight At NOLA's Penthouse* plays a key part in the album's strength. These are songs with great bones, and melodies that grow rather than recede in a duo setting. Stripped to their essence, they shine, while Hamilton and Sportiello's pure musicality deepens one's appreciation of the songs' structural brilliance.

—James Hale

Midnight At NOLA's Penthouse: Wonder Why; A Garden In The Rain; This Can't Be Love; A Time For Love; Come Back To Sorrento; All My Tomorrows; Big Butter And Egg Man; It's All In Your Mind; All God's Chillun' Got Rhythm; In The Middle Of A Kiss. (67:23)

Personnel: Scott Hamilton, tenor saxophone; Rossano Sportiello, piano.

Ordering info: arborsrecords.com

The John Santos Sextet *Filosofía Caribeña, Vol. 1*

MACHETE MUSIC 210

★★★★½

John Santos Y El Coro Folklorico Kindembo

La Esperanza

MACHETE MUSIC 209

★★★★

John Santos provides further evidence as to why he's one of today's most significant figures in Afro-Cuban music. Not only does he demonstrate superb command as a percussionist, composer and bandleader, he knows how to deliver music that moves the mind and hearts as well as the body. Such is the case for the dazzling *Filosofía Caribeña, Vol. 1*, a non-stop body rocker that demands repeated listening because of its infectious rhythms and erudite intents.

Santos underscores this music with political themes, touching upon the many commonalities between African American and Latino communities in hopes to restore the once strong bonds. He pays tribute to numerous figures, ranging from Argentine singer Mercedes Sosa and percussionists Armando Peraza and Francisco Aguabella to his Cape Verdean father and San Francisco Bay area mentors, Ron Stallings and Allen Smith.



The thematic eminence certainly lifts the music, most noticeably on John Calloway's "He Was One Of Us," which begins with Melecio Magdaluyo's gushing tenor saxophone before the music quickly quells into pneumatic balladry, paving the way for Calloway's ebullient flute solo. Santos' gorgeous "No Soy Combatiente," which features passionate lead vocals from Claudia Gómez and Pável Urkiza, and the anthemic "Resistencia (Resistance)," which provides the disc's funkier percussion breakdown. All of the compositions are sharply composed and arranged; they also allot plenty of space for extensive solos and group interplay yet also contain enough ingenious structures and melodic passages to prevent autopilot bluster.

Santos fuels *La Esperanza* with similar aus-

piciousness. This time he focuses more on traditional songs drawn from the Afro-Latin canon. Pairing down the instrumentation to mostly percussion, vocals, bass and strings, songs such as "Shangó" and "Obatalá" haunt and hypnotize because of their passionate antiphonic singing and rhythmic complexities. As Santos indicates in the liner notes, each song pays homage to significant sociopolitical activists and artists, ranging from Amiri Baraka, Abbey Lincoln and Jiddu Krishnamurti to the enchanting Santos original "La Esperanza" to Felipe Alfonso Pérez, founder member of the Conjunto Folklorico Nacional de Cuba on the gripping "Tiempos De Oyá." Riveting throughout, *La Esperanza* is yet another shining jewel in Santos' curatorial crown.

—John Murph

Filosofía Caribeña, Vol. 1: He Was One of Us; La Rumba Me Lleva; El Esqueleto Rumbero; No Soy Combatiente; Pop's Brim; Resistencia; The Sense Of Now; Refraneando; Siete Cuevas; Pomme A Gozar; Carnaval SF. (71:09)

Personnel: John Santos, caxixí, tumbadoras, batá, chekere, gong, cymbals, cajón, bombo and percussion; Claudia Gómez and Pável Urkiza, vocals; Dr. John Calloway, flute; Melecio Magaluyo, tenor saxophone; Saul Sierra, bass; Marco Diaz, piano; David Flores, drum set; Javier Navarrete, miscellaneous percussion.

La Esperanza: La Labanché; Elegia Para Alfredo; Palo Monte; La Esperanza; Shangó; Recuerda; Obatalá; Para Ser Un Buen Sonero; Llanto Para Un Amigo; Oshún Kolé; Tiempos De Oyá; Marakitché. (66:39)

Personnel: John Santos, miscellaneous percussion and vocals; Lazaro Galaraga, vocals; Sandy Perez, Harold Muniz, Michael Spiro, luminada Maldonado, bata; Barbara Valladares, Willie Ludwig, Jose Luis Gomez, Ismael Rodriguez, Reynalda Nunez, Beatriz Muniz, vocals; Luques Curtis, bass; Jimmy Bosch, Raul Navarrete, trombone; Anthony Blea, violin, Little Johnny Rivero, cajón; Jose Claussell, timbales; Destani Wolf, lead vocals; Mario Abruzzo, percussion; Elena Pinderhughes, Samora Pinderhughes, vocals; Orlando Toriente, Erick Barberia, Fito Reinoso, lead vocals.

Ordering info: johnsantos.com



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Antonio Ciacca Quintet with Steve Grossman
Lagos Blues
 MOTÉMA 32
 ★★½

Antonio Ciacca is informed by a broad range of influences. Two are particularly obvious, those being hard bop and Duke Ellington. But because most of the heat generated by *Lagos Blues* comes from the summit between two terrific tenor players, the emphasis here is less on the Ellington's tasty elegance and more on blowing.

The spark that ignites *Lagos Blues* comes from Ciacca's decision to invite his onetime mentor Steve Grossman to join in with his trio on these sessions. Because that group includes Stacy Dillard, the performances somewhat naturally break down to the synergy sought and achieved by the two saxophonists. While there is plenty to admire in the craftsmanship Ciacca displays as composer of the beautiful ballad "Nicoletta," the tendency elsewhere is to wait for the head to pass so we can hear the tenors dig in.

When playing in unison and in fourths at the top of "Take The D Train," the saxes ignite the band from the first beat; Ciacca benefits from coming in on his solo with bassist Kengo Nakamura and drummer Ulysses Owens already burning. Even better is when Grossman and Dillard roll up their sleeves and dive into carving



contests. When they trade verses and then half-verses on the Paul Chambers tune "Whims Of Chambers," real excitement builds as each responds to the other and then bats it back with his own distinctive spin. My guess is that Grossman has the richer, somewhat woollier timbre, with Dillard's being a little more brassy and tough. Each pushes outside the changes and pushes the rhythm section. But glimpses of real mastery occur more often with the one I'm pegging as Grossman—for instance, in how he gets under Ciacca's four-chord hook in the last four bars of "Body And Soul."

There is more to *Lagos Blues* than battling saxes: The medley of "Reflections In D" and "In A Sentimental Mood" showcases Ciacca, who handles the former unaccompanied, paying homage to Duke Ellington's harmonic essence and then transitioning with drums and bass into the latter with a blossoming chord sequence based on the melody rising and the bass descending chromatically. This performance, with the saxes sitting out, makes the point that Ciacca's love for the fiery groove is fed by insight and intelligence, too.

—Robert L. Doerschuk

Lagos Blues: Lagos Blues; Take The D Train; Nicoletta; Whims Of Chambers; Nico's Song; Body & Soul; Reflections In D/In A Sentimental Mood. (53:16)
Personnel: Antonio Ciacca, piano; Stacy Dillard and Steve Grossman, tenor saxophones; Kengo Nakamura, bass; Ulysses Owens, drums.
Ordering info: motema.com

Band Of Bones
Band Of Bones
 BB PRODUCTIONS 001
 ★★½

Multi-instrumentalist David Chamberlain, a flutist and expert in low-brass horns, assembled this unusual project. He's known elsewhere for leading The Hora Decima Brass Ensemble (with a wide ranging classical repertoire) and an Afro-Caribbean trio. While in jazz, nine trombones and rhythm isn't unprecedented—Slide Hampton's World of Trombones has a similar setup—Chamberlain views Band of Bones as a tribute to J.J. Johnson and Kai Winding's efforts to expand opportunities for the long horn. Though the personnel aren't nationally known, to a man they perform with professionalism and personality, each jousting to outdo the other with the most ear grabbing break or cleverly interpolated quote. Bob Suttman takes the first bone solo on Winding's rousing arrangement of "It's Allright With Me," sneaking in a nifty Thelonious Monk riff, then alternating with Nate Mayland and Matt McDonald. Suttman arranges "The Girl From Ipanema"



with a bruising intro before curiously agitated piano ostinatos suggest the suspense of the Rio beachfront onlooker.

Johnson's charts for "A Night In Tunisia" and "No Moon At All" are included with his original "Four Plus Four." On "Moon" Bruce Eidem takes one (his witty plunger work is featured next on Frank Wess' "Segue in C"); raspy Suttman follows, then the mellow but nimble McDonald, before Max Siegel's insouciant bass trombone. Your subwoofers better be ready for Siegel's buzzy solo on "Four By Four" because it sidles into the ear canal with wonderfully relaxed, subterranean phrasing. Amid the reheated chestnuts, "Bolivia" makes sense for trombonic navigation, and "Bonin'" boasts succinct blasts from everyone. Chamberlain takes the party out with flute on his arrangement of "El Manisero."

—Michael Jackson

Band Of Bones: It's Allright With Me; Four Plus Four; Bolivia; A Night In Tunisia; Laura; Getting Sentimental Over You; Dear Old Stockholm; Love Again; No Moon At All; Segue In C; Girl From Ipanema; Stardust; Bonin'; El Manisero. (67:29)
Personnel: David Chamberlain, trombone, flute, percussion; Bruce Eidem, Charlie Gordon, Mike Lomand, Nate Mayland, Matt McDonald, Bob Suttman, trombone; Max Siegel, Dale Turk, bass trombone; Kenny Ascher, piano; Dick Sarpola, bass; Mike Campenni, drums; Chemo Corniel, congas, cowbells.
Ordering info: bandofbones.com

Fela's Defiant Family Legacy

Whether entering into call-and-response discussions, echoing vocal pronouncements, leading exchanges, shading satirical remarks or speaking by way of grand marches, the brass sections in Afrobeat pioneer Fela Kuti's music don't act as wordless components—they facilitate and steer conversations, helping place the singer's politically charged and socially conscious lyrics on an elevated platform.

The sheer persuasive force of the woodwinds is one of myriad facets illuminated on **Fela Kuti: Vinyl Box Set I (Knitting Factory/Label Maison 720841400219 ★★★★★½)**, the first in a planned series of anthologies celebrating the heroic Nigerian's work on LP. Curated by Roots drummer Questlove—as qualified as anyone to do the honors, given his mammoth record collection and tireless enthusiasm—it houses six albums culled from Kuti's massive discography. Outside of a concert-poster facsimile and 12-page book, there aren't any extras. As reissues go, the sound quality of the pressings is average and the cover-art reproduction slightly disappointing. Yet the music transcends the tertiary concerns.

Kuti's inimitable life story and prolific art have been boosted by a surge in interest over the past decade. He's the subject of a smash Broadway play, topic of a rumored feature film, and chief influence on modern performers ranging from Afrobeat revivalist Antibalas to Somali-born emcee K'naan to countless hip-hop acts. Specializing in pieces that extend upwards of 15 minutes in length, ride obstinate grooves and feature confrontational narratives largely delivered in pidgin English or Yoruba, Kuti is the antithesis of today's sanitized, instant-gratification culture—a provocateur whose messages concerning unification, human rights, corruption and corporate hegemony spread via trancelike blends of polyrhythmic soul and syncopated African-centric funk.

Even more restrained affairs, like 1977's *Sorrow, Tears & Blood*, made in the wake of the Nigerian army's attack on Kuti's commune, simmer with defiant energy and optimistic vibes. Art Ensemble of Chicago trumpeter Lester Bowie guests, and two songs resound as both wake-up-calls and calls-to-arms. Kuti enunciates words and weaves together phrases in exaggerated styles that mirror the percussive-based arrangements. Nearly every instrument serves a rhythmic purpose; this is protest music aimed at the mind and the feet.

For 1989's *Beasts Of No Nation*, the most recent album included here and home to the first composition Kuti released after being liberated from prison, the bandleader turns to tropical guitar lines and suave, isolated saxophone breaks. They punch holes in the tangled



Fela Kuti

webs of stacked brass and pulsating tribal beats. A scathing condemnation of fraud and oppression promoted in post-colonial Nigeria by first-world countries, the magnetic title track chastises the normally revered United Nations. Note, too, the depictions of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher as demons on the illustrated album cover—the humor indicative of the looseness and spirited defiance in Kuti's craft.

And so it goes on 1975's *Expensive Shit*, named after the police's interest in Kuti's defecation following a potential marijuana charge. The title track and "Water No Get Enemy" skip along to piano-based passages and horn refrains that snort in unison. The joke is on the authorities; the listener is privy to the entire affair. Along with 1975's *Everything Scatter*, 1977's *Fear Not For Man* and 1986's *Teacher Don't Teach Me Nonsense*, which round out the vinyl set, this release will send even the faintly curious on an Afrobeat spree.

Like father, like sons: Seun Kuti and Femi Kuti trace their dad's footsteps. The former takes a more traditional route on ***From Africa With Fury: Rise* (Knitting Factory 1110 46:48 ★★★★★½)**, even pairing with Fela's old combo, Egypt 80. "Rise up against the petroleum companies," demands Seun. "Rise against all African rulers." Same problems, similar culprits, interchangeable tempos. By contrast, Femi establishes a sound that updates that of his patriarch on his impressive, raw-molded ***Africa For Africa* (Knitting Factory 1113 63:05 ★★★★★)**. While the disc features concise structures that wink at pop hooks, it clings to a subversive dance-rock dynamic. Exhilarating. **DB**

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Tim Berne *Insomnia*

CLEAN FEED 215

★★★★

Tim Berne's determination has finally paid off. Listening to *Insomnia*, recorded in 1997, one can understand why the alto and baritone saxophonist was so adamant about putting this recording out. It documents one of his lesser-known facets. It only includes two sprawling pieces, which was symptomatic of this stage of his career. But it is also not as fierce as some of his albums with Bloodcount, the quartet that featured Chris Speed, Michael Formanek and Jim Black. Although those musicians are still in the lineup, the fact that Speed plays only the clarinet and Marc Ducret's guitar—alongside violinist Dominique Pifarély and



cellist Erik Friedlander—indicates that a chamber music feel dominates the proceedings.

As is Berne's habit with compositions of such epic proportions, they include sections where the octet breaks up in smaller groups. Each member of the band gets opportunities to shine, but Speed usually steals the

show, whether engaging in a lively duet with the bandleader or uttering otherworldly sonorities. Berne's wide panoply of devices is most successful when he lets soloists engage in intense soliloquies over a quiet backdrop.

—Alain Drouot

Insomnia: The Proposal; Open, Coma. (65:53)

Personnel: Tim Berne, alto and baritone saxophones; Baikida Carroll, trumpet; Chris Speed, clarinet; Marc Ducret, guitar; Dominique Pifarély, violin; Erik Friedlander, cello; Michael Formanek, bass; Jim Black, drums.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com



Alexis Cuadrado *Noneto Ibérico*

BJU RECORDS 22

★★★★

Guitarist Alexis Cuadrado takes a modest approach on the transfixing *Noneto Ibérico*, an original eight-movement instrumental suite riveted together with complex ideas, vibrant flamenco strains and a world of textures that never calls attention to itself. The record teems with surprising time-signature shifts, stacked rhythms and counterpoint passages yet comes across as entirely natural. Gypsy melodies, chamber-pop, baroque passages, avant-garde minimalism and funk contribute to this spry sonic potpourri that hypnotizes and fascinates.

A founder of the Brooklyn Jazz Underground, Cuadrado's flamenco infatuation began several years ago. The obsession ultimately motivated the bassist to play some of the repertoire with a trio; a grant allowed him to expand to a nonet. After writing each of the album's selections around a flamenco style known as palo—a form that must adhere to certain idiosyncratic rules to be deemed authentic—Cuadrado recruited several of the New York underground's finest players to share in his vision for an epic fusion.

While based in structure, the lively pieces allow for a liberal degree of improvisation. Alan Ferber stretches his legs with a mellow trombone solo during "Te Sigo (Seguiriya)," which invites individualistic freedom without losing focus. The genius of Cuadrado's tonally pungent and fairly lengthy compositions relates to how they're tethered to central motifs that often function as bookends. Cuadrado's woody bass lines in "Tocar Y Parar (Alegrías)" echo the tune's "Palmas Y Jaleos" flamenco handclaps. On "Por La Minima (Bulerías)," the horns serve as a synchronized system of levers and pulleys that work in tandem toward the same common goal.

—Bob Gendron

Noneto Ibérico: Very Well (Fandango); Tocar Y Parar (Alegrías); Te Sigo (Seguiriya); Por La Minima (Bulerías); Sólo El Sol Sale Siempre Solo (Soleá); Draconium (Tanguillos); A Tientas (Tientos); Los Pan-chitos (Rumba). (78:00)

Personnel: Perico Sambeat, saxophones/flute; Loren Stillman, saxophones; Avishai Cohen, trumpet; Alan Ferber, trombone; Brad Shepik, guitar; Dan Tepfer, piano; Alexis Cuadrado, bass; Marc Miralta, percussion; Mark Ferber, drums; Israel Suárez "Piraña," Tomás Moreno, Blas Córdoba Kejjo, flamenco handclaps.

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The Queen's Credentials

When Aretha Franklin signed with Columbia, at age 18 in 1960, the former child gospel star's career could have gone anywhere. During the next five years she recorded a series of albums and singles on which she embraced contemporary jazz and pop, while retaining her church origins. But Franklin's unmistakable voice did not yet receive the wide audience it deserved—that would come after she moved to Atlantic in 1966 and became universally recognized as the queen of soul.

So goes the shorthand version of Franklin's trajectory, which is why those Columbia recordings have never been recognized for their own majesty. These sides have been unjustly categorized as mere stepping stones to her later artistic and commercial r&b triumphs. In her book *Nowhere To Run*, writer Geri Hirshey went so far as to dismiss the label as "restrictive" and providing the singer with "ill-fitting material." These misperceptions should be completely upended because of the wonderful 11-CD/1-DVD box set **Take A Look: Aretha Franklin Complete On Columbia** (Sony/Legacy 88697792792; 63:49/49:34/59:19/54:07/37:44/40:10/55:09/38:56/53:59/74:56/59:45 ★★★★★).

In the early and mid-'60s, Franklin could have been on her way to becoming an original jazz, or Broadway, song stylist, as she was championed early on in the pages of *DownBeat* (positive early press that she's never forgotten). When producer John Hammond brought her together with Ray Bryant for *Aretha (With The Ray Bryant Combo)* in 1960, she was paired with an accomplished jazz pianist with his own background in gospel. Listening to this album more than 50 years later, it's shocking how mature she sounded alongside Bryant and other veterans, particularly her boisterous sense of swing, incredible pitch, excellent phrasing and ebullient ad-libs on "It Ain't Necessarily So" and "Today I Sing The Blues." She also mastered complex and quick changes in tempo and mood on the following year's larger-band albums *The Electrifying Aretha Franklin* and *The Tender, The Moving, The Swinging Aretha Franklin*. But the most quietly audacious album that Franklin released on Columbia, *Unforgettable: A Tribute To Dinah Washington*, came out in 1964, the year after Washington's death. (Washington had been a friend to Franklin's father, C.L. Franklin). Franklin captured the bluesy ethos of the recently departed singer (adding in hints of Little Jimmy Scott), yet brought in a warmth and vocal flights all her own.

Take A Look also contains sessions that mysteriously hadn't been compiled as al-



bums when they were recorded. Had they been, words like "restrictive" probably would have never been applied to Franklin's Columbia years. Those included *Tiny Sparrow: The Bobby Scott Sessions*, a richly orchestrated work in which producer Scott has Franklin convincingly delve into such classic jazz compositions as Billy Strayhorn's "My Little Brown Book" alongside lesser-known r&b gems, like "Please Answer Me" (written by L.C. Cooke, brother to Franklin's childhood crush, Sam Cooke). Another previously unreleased compilation album, *A Bit Of Soul* from 1965, featured Franklin's endearing pop songs like the Motown-reflective "One Step Ahead," which should have provided her the crossover hits she was seeking at the time.

Box set producer Leo Sacks and Sony/Legacy present the discs inside replicas of the original album sleeves. For those previously uncompleted album sessions, the contemporary artwork for these newly assembled records blend well with the vintage LPs. All of which adds up to a better packaging aesthetic than cramming more tracks on fewer CDs. The resulting design bolsters the narrative of how Franklin's Columbia years should have been shaped, and how they can be properly evaluated today. Equally outstanding are the sound quality on the recently uncovered mono mixes, the thorough annotation, the vibrant photographs, Daphne Brooks' insightful liner note essay and corporate communiques included in the collection.

The most striking visual element of *Take A Look* is the DVD that compiles Franklin's five performances on "The Steve Allen Show" from 1964. Seated at the piano, the 22-year-old commanded low-end rumbling chords to anchor her already soaring voice. On "Evil Gal Blues," her gleaming smile makes the rough attitude no less convincing. Even then, Aretha Franklin knew where she was going. **DB**

Ordering info: legacyrecordings.com



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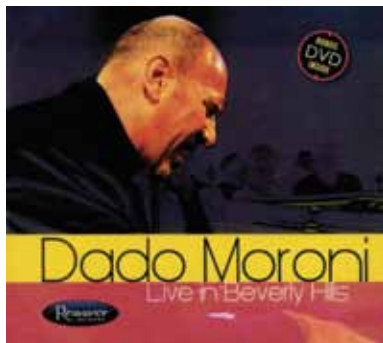
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Dado Moroni Trio
Shapes
TCB 30302
★★★

Dado Moroni Trio
Live In Beverly Hills
RESONANCE 1012
★★★★ 1/2



Genoese pianist Dado Moroni doesn't get to New York as often as he used to—he made frequent visits to the Big Apple during the '80s, and a ten-year residence began in 1991. But on these two recent trio recordings, Moroni refracts the deep groove, highbrow harmony, orchestral conception and storytelling imperatives that define the music of New York piano schoolers like Kenny Barron, John Hicks, Cedar Walton, Harold Mabern and Mulgrew Miller.

Moroni made *Shapes* in a Genoa studio with bassist Peter Washington and Italian drummer Enzo Zirilli, who plays many of his European gigs. The pianist's declamations are chockablock full of ideas. The program has five Moroni originals, including a Thelonious Monkish blues ("The Duck And The Duchess"), a Billy Strayhornesque elegy ("Ballade Pour Gianni") and a turbulent, rollicking homage to McCoy Tyner ("Brother Alfred"), as well as soulful readings of Ivan Lins' "Love Dance" and Antônio Carlos Jobim's "Desafinado," not to mention a pair of original blues songs played on

the Rhodes. Washington contributes impeccable bass lines and strong solos, but Zirilli, an intense swinger, is more pedestrian—there isn't a lot of variety to his beats, and he doesn't play enough self-generated ideas to spark dialogue.

In contrast, on *Live In Beverly Hills*, Moroni trialogues with erudition and heat through eight nicely-paced tunes with bassist Marco Panascia and

drummer Peter Erskine. Broadway and jazz standards along with a traditional Sicilian song augment three Moroni originals. The conversations are not short, but Moroni finds fresh, melodic pathways, channeling Mediterranean romanticism and charm conveyed with authoritative New York attitude. The energy never lags, reaching a creative peak on the closer, "Jamal," which reaches levels of multi-thematic interplay worthy of its dedicatee. The ensemble chemistry and exemplary craft are palpably rendered on the DVD, which is edited in a manner that offers an effective, never gimmicky representation of three-way listening.

—Ted Panken

Shapes: Ballade Pour Gianni; Brother Alfred; Desafinado; The Duck And The Duchess; Love Dance; F.B.S.; For The Time Being; Shark Attack; Here's To Life. (62:09)

Personnel: Dado Moroni, piano; Peter Washington, bass; Enzo Zirilli, drums.

Ordering info: tcb.ch

Live In Beverly Hills: Ghanian Village; Django; Where Is Love; I Hear A Rhapsody; Einbahnstrasse; Vitti Na Crozza; Nose Off; Jamal. (72:31) DVD/Blu-Ray Additional Tracks: Set Closer Blues; Just An Old Song. (86:21)

Personnel: Dado Moroni, piano; Marco Panascia, bass; Peter Erskine, drums.

Ordering info: resonancerecords.org

Klang
Other Doors
ALLOS DOCUMENTS 006
★★★★

Jazz has always been associated with struggle, but over time the struggles have changed. When Benny Goodman's band played in ballrooms across the United States, the challenge was to win first the hearts, minds and dancing feet of America, and ultimately its respect. He also waged an ongoing skirmish with the nation's racism, a fact alluded to by the Colored Admission sign that adorns the cover of Klang's new album. Nowadays the challenge is for jazz to be heard at all. Although one of the highest profile jazz festivals in the country commissioned the music heard on *Other Doors*, it took a pledge campaign on kickstarter.com to get the funding to record it.

Despite a lineup that includes clarinet and vibes, Klang was not an obvious choice to pay tribute to Goodman. While the quartet's leader, clarinetist James Falzone, is, like Goodman, well steeped in both swing and classical music, his allegiance lies more with Jimmy Giuffrè and the



music of Brittany and the Middle East. But that distance is part of what makes this album stand apart from the repertory exhumations that clog the jazz bins in those few stores that still carry jazz records. There's no musty stench of antiquity about these performances. While they honor much that Goodman stood for—"AC/DC Current," for example, is full of joy and swings like mad, and the musicianship on "Stompin' At The Savoy" is of the highest level—they don't forget who they are or where they come from. Their shared history in groups like Vox Arcana, Engines, and the Valentine Trio is as much an inspiration as Goodman's tunes for the masterful mixing of tight ensemble playing, free improvising and exploratory atmospherics found on *Other Doors*.

—Bill Meyer

Other Doors: These Foolish Things (Prelude); Breakfast Feud; Stompin' At The Savoy; Angles Sing; Memories Of You; Rose Room; Shevitz's Dream; Other Doors; The 4:08; Six Appeal; The Want Want Blues; The Already And The Not Yet (for Charlie Christian); Goodman's Paradox; AC/DC Current; These Foolish Things (postlude). (59:15)

Personnel: James Falzone, clarinet; Jason Adasiewicz, vibraphone; Jason Roebke, bass; Tim Daisy, drums; Josh Berman, cornet; Jeb Bishop, trombone; Keefe Jackson, tenor saxophone and bass clarinet; Fred Lonberg-Holm, cello and electronics.

Ordering info: allosmusica.org



Mostly Other People Do The Killing *The Coimbra Concert*

CLEAN FEED 214

★★★★½

I hooted with laughter at the photo of Jon Irabagon eating pickles at the piano and Peter Evans lurching over the keys as if sucking a lemon, part of the latest CD art parody from this quartet of omnivorous mavericks. The joke's at the expense of Keith Jarrett's epochal ECM *The Köln Concert*; Manfred Eicher won't be signing these troublemakers imminently.

This twofer captures two festival sets in Coimbra, Brazil. The band's juiced-up sonic assault storms the stage with boorish abandon or erudite tomfoolery, take your pick. Much blame for the madness is aimed at drummer and performance artist Kevin Shea, but bassist and bandleader Moppa Elliott is the de facto ringmaster of the mayhem, and Irabagon has taken the anarchic humor most to heart (extending to his solo projects).

A preposterous wealth of mischief, jump-cutting and monster blowing inhabits both discs. Tracks nominally begin with Elliott's heads, fueled by intermittent riffs, rapidly veering off. Spastic drums herald "Drainlick," after which all stop dead at the splash of Shea's mini cymbal. Evans embarks with brash New Orleans trumpet, and Shea responds with Flash Gordon effects. Irabagon's outburst is overt free-jazz, with Evans injecting Klaxon shards of the theme, then horns knit on the fast outro of "Shamokin!!!," the title track of the CD that brought them notoriety. "Evans City" and "Factoryville" hark back to that 2006 release, as does "Night In Tunisia." tailending the half-hour of outrage that is "Blue Ball." Four minutes of cycle-breathing soprano from Irabagon conjures Evan Parker and David S. Ware dancing with Cinderella's mice on hot coals. Evans' anachronistic riposte suggests Louis Armstrong obsessing with Thelonious Monk's "Let's Cool One," ending on a curlicue of "I'm A Fool To Want You."

Other gratuitous quotes include "Our Love Is Here To Stay," "Night Train," "Birdland" (in high altissimo), as well as nuggets from the Brecker Brothers, Pink Floyd and assorted pop earworms. Such antics might be dismissed as sophomoric, barring the circus-grade pyrotechnics, which run the gamut of cascading bop'n'swing licks, slaptonguing, reed snarling, overblowing, pseudo beginner squeaks, note bending, comedic dissonance and cross-idiom, era-spanning fluency.

It's mostly loud and unrelenting but there are cute moments, such as on "Factoryville"

when, as if the angry neighbor who lives upstairs just screamed STFU, the band abruptly quietens, resorting to tabla, tinkling sounds, Harmon mute, creepy crawly bass and snaking lines that culminate in an Ellingtonesque swagger, which hits the buffers with split-tone tenor rasp and trumpet growl. Exhausting, exhilarating and marvelously annoying.

—Michael Jackson

The Coimbra Concert: Disc 1: Drainlick; Evans City; Round Bottom; Square Top; Blue Ball (63:01). Disc 2: Pen Argyll; Burning Well; Factoryville; St. Mary's Proctor; Elliott Mills. (50:57)

Personnel: Peter Evans, trumpet; Jon Irabagon, tenor and soprano saxophone; Moppa Elliott, bass; Kevin Shea, drums.

Ordering info: cleanfeed-records.com

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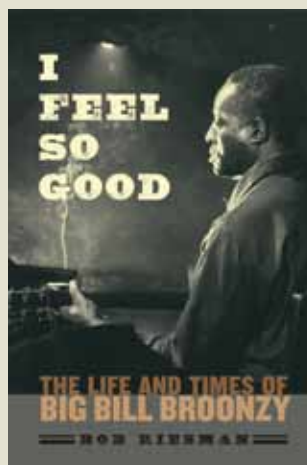
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Blues Pioneer Big Bill Broonzy Stared Down Changing Times

Singer/songwriter/guitarist Big Bill Broonzy was an acknowledged blues pioneer. Not only did he help mold the prewar Chicago blues sound of the '20s-'40s, but he also helped mentor the generation that came after him in the '50s, including such performers as Little Walter and Muddy Waters. Broonzy was also one of the first blues lyricists who didn't just cut-and-paste from existing songs. And as a performer, he was likely one of the first black musicians who discovered that there was a potential white market for the blues, right at the time when his brand of blues was waning in the African American community. Bob Riesman examines the man in the new biography *I Feel So Good: The Life And Times Of Big Bill Broonzy* (University of Chicago Press).

One benefit of being one of the first blues acts to be discovered by white audiences is that Broonzy

frequently told his story throughout his life. By now, fans have become accustomed to blues musicians from this era dying before any kind of interviews or biographies could be released. Since there was very little literary interest in any other act who died before the '60s blues resurgence, everyone has had to rely on conjecture, second- and third-hand accounts and piecing fragments together. Broonzy, on the other hand, was obsessed with getting his history down while he lived it, whether these were notes to a friend or an interview with a British music paper. However, Broonzy was also a master storyteller who could hold his own with the African griots of yore. And if he felt he had to exaggerate, borrow from the stories of others, or even outright lie, nothing would stop him. As long as he held the listener's attention and got his own point across, it was all good (and



he had enough charisma to pull it off). Riesman does an excellent job of sifting through conflicting accounts of Broonzy's marital and workforce history, often presenting multiple sides of the tales. He used a bewildering array of sources to help draw his conclusions, going

through numerous archives, museums and music societies, as well as talking to those who were there for another point of view.

Broonzy, as seen through Riesman's tome, survived remarkably by his wits, particularly as his contemporaries in the '30's blues scene fell off from various vices. Broonzy was prescient enough to predict the trends as they happened. When the old-style bluebird beat that he pioneered finally went out of style in the '50s, rather than make a futile attempt to keep up with the young 'uns, he simply redirected his talents towards the folk scene, became a kingpin in that field. He was not a forgotten man in his final years; when he was dying of cancer in 1958, several of his blues and gospel contemporaries were quick to pay tribute in some form. This book perceptively tells it all.

DB

Ordering info: press.uchicago.edu

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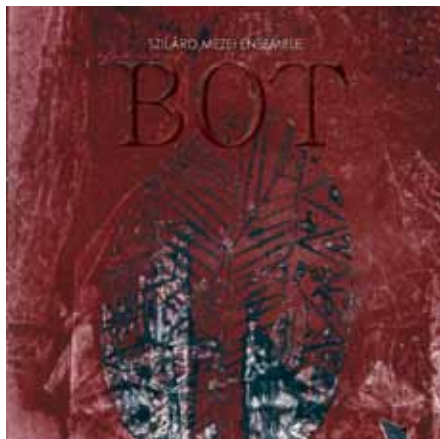
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Szilárd Mezei Ensemble

Bot

NOT TWO 818

★★★★½

Szilárd Mezei Szabad Quartet

Februári Fadöntés

NO BUSINESS 28

★★★★★

Serbian-born, ethnically Hungarian violist and bandleader Szilárd Mezei has demonstrated a maddening prolificacy since emerging on the international music scene over the last decade. These two recent entries to his discography do a nice job at conveying some of his range and ambition. *Bot* is a sprawling double CD focusing on more orchestral work recorded with a 10-piece group back in 2004. While specific passages here and there tap into an explicit jazz vocabulary, like the subtle swing ballad section early in “Tamara—ki?” where bassist Ervin Malina reveals an easy feel for walking, most of Mezei’s works transcend any specific idiom, favoring dense stylistic composites (jazz, classical, Eastern European folk music) that switch focus as nonchalantly as they shift tempos. Improvisation is the core activity in his music, but his arrangements and writing are equally impressive, whether that means how his thick, blocky harmonies move or how he chooses specific combinations in more open sections—like the hurtling mix of clarinet, tuba and trombone. Mezei is a superb soloist, but he’s judicious with his own improvisation space, getting each member involved. On the traditional folk song “Yerma” he brings a rhythmic elasticity and spry energy to lift up a beautifully mournful melody.

The writing on the quartet album *Februári Fadöntés*, released only on vinyl, is equally strong, but here the musicians engage in much more rigorous and extended improvisation, especially the frontline of Mezei and scorching reedist Péter Bede, who also works with the inventive Romany cimbalon master Kalman Balogh in his Gypsy Cimbalom Band. Mezei’s compositions are episodic sa-

gas that shift rhythms, densities and moods in sharply calibrated transitions, flowing smoothly between composed passages and high-energy free jazz, with tough, multi-linear blowing. The sidelong “Akkorra/By Them” layers its slow, sorrowful melody over busy rhythms, while “Pákák/Sedges” is a restrained, flickering ballad that’s no less intense for its gentleness. The title track, which veers toward simmering post-bop, offers less frenetic solos by Bede and Mezei. Obviously the viola remains a scarce instrument in jazz, and while Mezei incorporates some of the same microtonality employed

by Mat Maneri, his playing is more buoyant, trading in the gliss drag for something more crackling.

—Peter Margasak

Bot: Disc 1: Bot/Stick; Föld—levegő/Earth and Air; Tamara—ki/Tamara Who?; Yerma; Tibeti Gyros/Tibetan Allegro; Lépésben/In Step. (79:45) Disc 2: Női Box/Female Boxing; Csip sip; Huzatos huzat/Breezy Draught; Napszekér/Chariot Of Sun; Medium. (79:32)

Personnel: Emőke Zákány, oboe; Bogdan Rankovic, bass clarinet, clarinet, alto saxophone; Damir Bacikin, trumpet; Lordan Skenderovic, trumpet (disc 1, 1–4, disc 2, 1, 5); Slobodan Dragas, trumpet (disc 1, 5, 6; disc 2, 2–4); Branislav Aksin, trombone; Kornél Pálista, tuba; Szilárd Mezei, viola; Radmilla Stanisic, cello; Ervin Malina, bass; István Csik, drums, percussion.

Ordering info: nottwo.com

Februári Fadöntés: Akkorra/By Them; Pákák/Sedges; Februári Fadöntés/Feeling In February. (41:48)

Personnel: Szilárd Mezei, viola; Péter Bede, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Ernő Hock, bass; Hunor G. Szabo, drums.

Ordering info: nobusinessrecords.com

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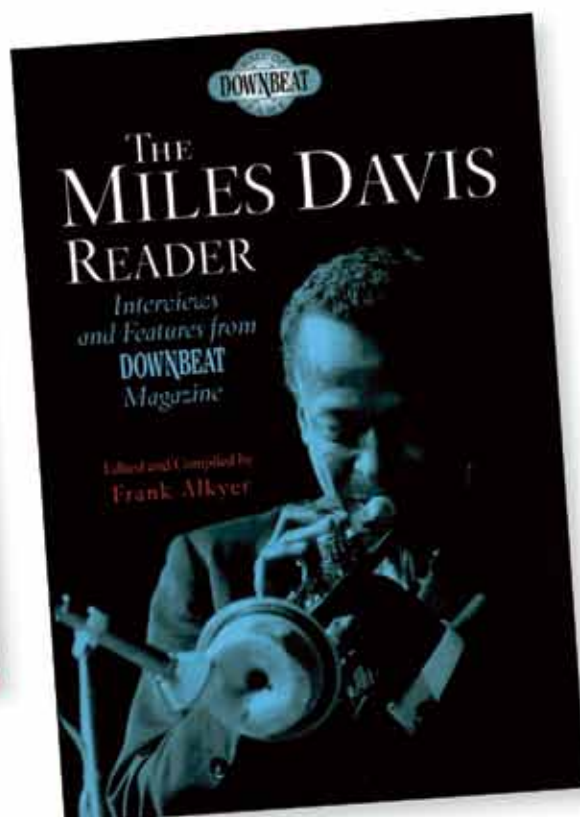
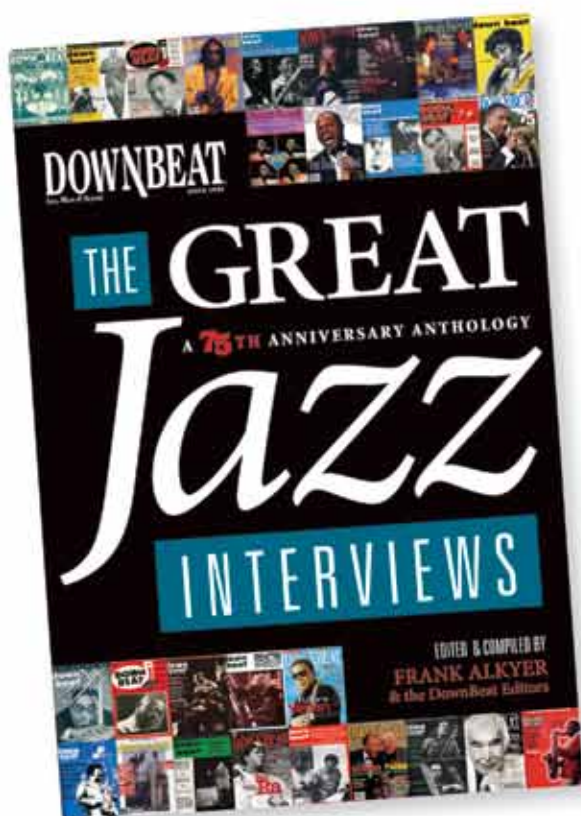
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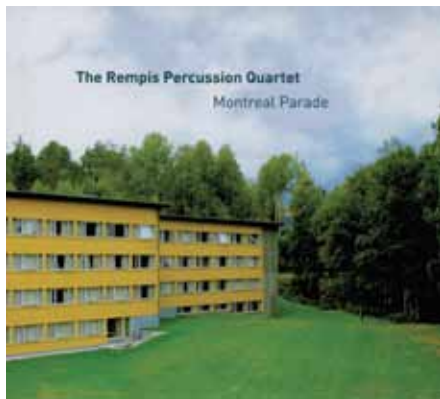
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Ballister *Bastard String*

PNL
★★★★

The Rempis Percussion Quartet *Montreal Parade*

482 MUSIC 482-1075
★★★★

There are plenty of parallels between these ensembles. Both feature saxophonist Dave Rempis in partnership with a fellow former member of the recently defunct Vandermark 5; both have a Norwegian in the engine room; and both are committed to long-form improvisation.

Ballister is named after a crossbow, and they put a premium on aggression. Paal Nilssen-Love's drumming is brutal and precise, driving Dave Rempis's rampaging reed streams to near-hysterical heights of expression but never letting him go off the rails. Fred Lonberg-Holm plays his effects as much as his cello, thrusting with serrated fuzz-tones as often as he claws with savage bow strikes. There is no musician alive who more completely realizes the marriage of Jimi Hendrix's artful amplifier abuse to post-Anthony Braxtonian improvisational rigor. This trio formed in 2009, and this self-released CDR was recorded just a year later, so there's a freshness and sense of discovery in their wide-ranging music. But there's also a deep and hard-earned understanding between these players which enables them to build tension to the point of shattering, and then surf gracefully upon the shards.

Montreal Parade is the Rempis Percussion Quartet's fifth record, but it also represents a new beginning. Two priorities have always guided the quartet; to exploit the chemistry between drummers Tim Daisy and Frank Rosaly, and to play long-form improvisations that sustain and develop with the coherence of a scripted narrative. After half a dozen years they'd gotten so well practiced at both that predictability threatened, so Rempis made a change. Exit bassist Anton Hatwich and enter Ingebrigt Håker Flaten. While they're still doing essentially the same thing, the music sounds quite different. Håker Flaten often favors probing melodies over walking lines, and the absence of a clearly defined central pulse opens up the music in thrilling ways. On

"This Is Not A Tango" the drummers pick up the slack by building up loping, West African-style polyrhythms; the bassist's figures comment appreciatively upon them, while Rempis unleashes long, twisting utterances capped by short, dancing punctuations. Always a capable improviser, the saxophonist's playing here attains a new level of fluid grace.

On the bewilderingly named second piece, which lasts over 42 minutes, the group quickly discards a steaming groove to fly into meterless free improvisation. This in turn gives way to the quietest music the Quartet has put on record.

Composed of confidential whispers and small, quick gestures, it's spellbinding. One might expect a performance this long to have some barren patches, but those dull parts never come.

—Bill Meyer

Bastard String: Belt And Claw; Bastard String; Cocking Lugs. (72:13)

Personnel: Dave Rempis, alto, tenor, and baritone saxophones; Fred Lonberg-Holm, cello and electronics; Paal Nilssen-Love, drums and percussion.

Ordering info: paalnilssen-love.com

Montreal Parade: This Is Not A Tango; If You Were A Waffle And I Were A Bee. (62:34)

Personnel: Dave Rempis, alto, tenor and baritone saxophones; Ingebrigt Håker Flaten, bass;

Tim Daisy, drums; Frank Rosaly, drums.

Ordering info: 482music.com

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Interviews by
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Equipment adjustments should be well thought out after countless hours of practice. Any change to mouthpiece diameter, cup depth, rim size or shape will affect your playing. If you make a drastic change, you'll pay dearly elsewhere on the instrument. A small, shallow

cup with a rounded rim will cost you accuracy, and your sound in the middle and lower registers might resemble a kazoo, too big and too sharp; the tone spreads and endurance becomes an issue.

A good place to start with mouthpieces is in the middle. I have actually remained around a medium to medium-deep “C” cup my entire career. Since most trumpet players compare sizes to Bach mouthpieces, a 3C is a nice starting point. I use a Denis Wick MM4C for most of my playing and occasionally will make slight mouthpiece size adjustments depending upon the task at hand. We all want to make a beautiful sound 100 percent of the time and to be as

Example



consistent as possible. Before making any equipment change, try to fix problems in the practice room. Steps to reduce tension and conserve energy should be taken by every trumpet player to improve range, efficiency and consistency. I have had tremendous success with students at all levels using the following series of exercises.

After a short warmup, perhaps 10 minutes, play the first five notes of a B \flat concert scale. Listen to the sound. Play a low C at a comfortable volume and listen to your tone. How is it? Could it improve? Now, put a practice mute in your bell such as a Denis Wick, Yamaha Silent Brass, Jo Ral or Humes & Berg. If you don't have a practice mute, a harmon will work pretty well. Play a low C at a comfortable volume, and let the note resonate. Increase the volume a few more times until the sound gets unstable. Then, from a low C, play a descending chromatic scale very slowly at fortissimo to a low F# (see music example). Keep your throat as relaxed as possible. The sound will wobble and be unstable. Let this happen, as it is helping to open up your sound. Remove the mute and play the scale again. You will notice that your sound has opened up significantly. You can actually watch a demo of this exercise on the Internet at youtube.com/watch?v=XpmiYp8-MXI.

A stable embouchure is of paramount importance in achieving a clear, consistent sound through the entire instrument. One cause of instability is poor mouthpiece placement on the chops or too much shifting of the mouthpiece as we move from the low register to the high register. The instrument should pivot slightly upward for the lower register and downward for the upper register, but mouthpiece placement should change very little. After playing through the following exercises, you will find that your sound is more open and relaxed and your range will improve. This slightly modified daily exercise is based on a series of chromatic studies in *Arban's Complete Conservatory Method For Trumpet*, chromatic scales section, number 8. It is on page 79 in the Authentic Edition.

Play a long tone on a G at a relaxed mezzo forte (see example). After you feel you are making your best sound, take a breath and play a slow chromatic scale to low G and hold the note until it sounds clear and stable. Without re-setting your embouchure, take a breath and play a slurred two-octave chromatic scale (triplets), ascending and descending, at a tempo of about 100 quarter notes per minute. Increase your volume to forte as you ascend and decrease back to mezzo forte as you descend. Repeat the exercise starting one half-step higher each time (A \flat , A, B \flat , etc.) until you reach the top of your comfortable range. I have had success with students playing with an adjustable cup mute if they have trouble getting used to the open feeling as they approach the upper octave. First have the cup

"tight," or with the rim very close to the bell. As you adjust to the open feeling, gradually slide the cup away from the bell and eventually remove the mute. A clearer and more relaxed sound in the upper register will be achieved if you are playing the exercises correctly. Use a full-length mirror and observe your entire body to make sure you are not wasting energy by cre-

ating undue tension. Increasing range requires time and patience. **DB**

JAZZ TRUMPETER KIRK GARRISON IS AN ACTIVE MUSICIAN, COMPOSER/ARRANGER AND CLINICIAN RESIDING IN THE CHICAGO AREA. HE IS AN ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT DEPAUL AND CONCORDIA UNIVERSITIES AND IS SPONSORED BY DENIS WICK MOUTHPIECES AND MUTES/DANSR USA. FOR CLINICIAN INFORMATION PLEASE EMAIL: KIRKGARRISON@ATT.NET.



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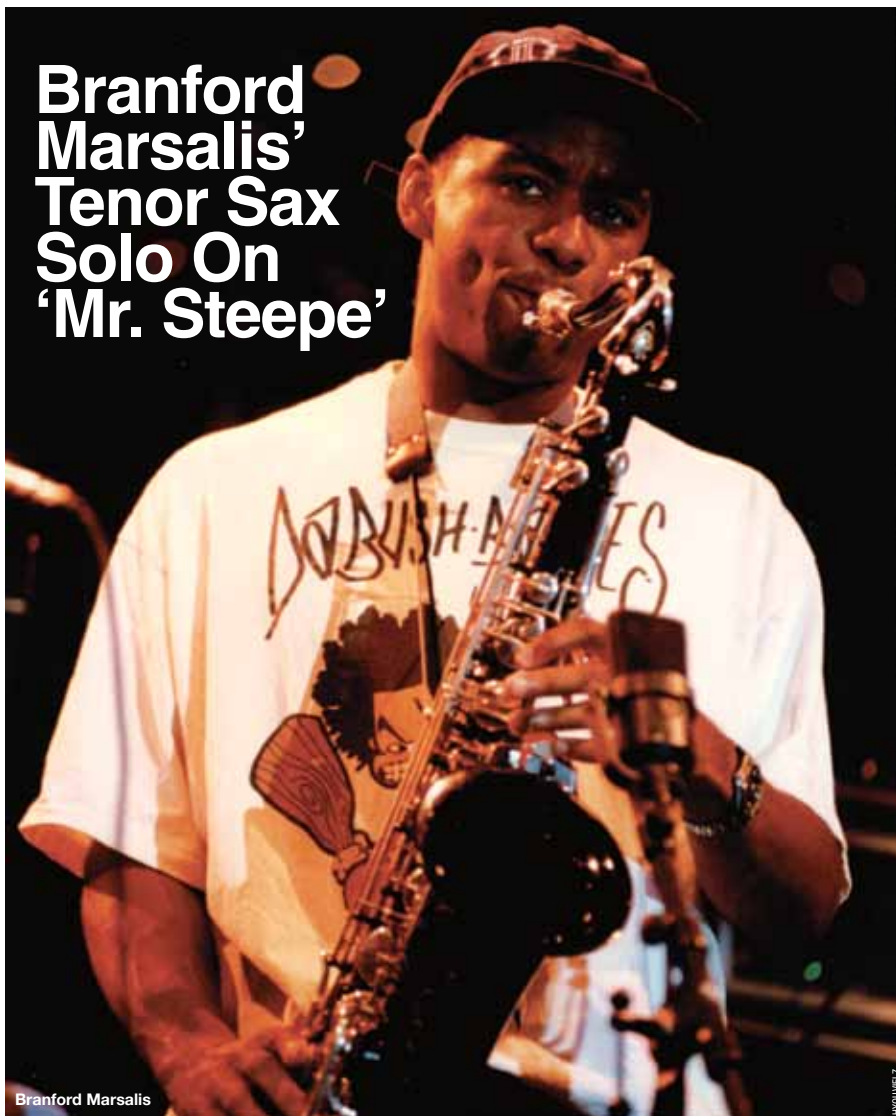
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Branford Marsalis' Tenor Sax Solo On 'Mr. Steepe'



Branford Marsalis

One of the greatest challenges to any improviser is that of playing at a fast tempo. To clarify: One of the greatest challenges is playing *well* at a fast tempo. To do this, one's melodic lines must have intentional beginnings and endings and their content needs to have direction. A common trap for players to fall into, particularly less experienced ones, is to focus on playing notes without thinking about how the melody sounds. Examining a solo by a master musician such as Branford Marsalis can provide insight on how to avoid this.

"Mr. Steepe" is an uptempo minor blues from Marsalis' album *Crazy People Music* (1990). When you first hear this solo you cannot help but be impressed by his technique. While technique is certainly something to admire, what's more remarkable is the fact that his melodic lines are just that—melodic.

Marsalis is not simply playing notes in or-

der to keep up with the tempo. Take a look at the first chorus as an example. It begins with a phrase that contains longer note values and ends with the repetition of a simple rhythmic pattern. The 14th chorus also shows this as Marsalis plays two-note phrases that are separated by one or two beats. Playing in this way shows that he is comfortable with the tempo and is making musical decisions.

In regard to the eighth-note lines that he does play, very few last longer than four measures. The eighth chorus, for instance, begins with an eighth-note line that lasts for almost four measures. Following this is a two-measure line and a few shorter phrases lasting about a measure each until the chorus ends with another two-measure phrase. Once again, Marsalis shows how comfortable he is with the tempo by being able to start and end a phrase wherever he wants.

There may be some moments in this solo

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CHORUS 1

CHORUS 8

CHORUS 14

that seem confusing to some listeners in terms of the scale/harmonic choices being made. While some substitutions do happen, do not discount the approach of simply playing outside the chord changes. Marsalis does this frequently throughout this solo by playing ideas based off of A \flat , usually over the Gmin7 chord. True, there could be a harmonic technique being used in these moments, but it is also just as likely that he is simply stepping outside of the changes.

The eighth chorus shows Marsalis outlining an A \flat major triad over the Dmin7 in the second and third measures. The rest of the phrase utilizes some chromaticism, the D harmonic minor scale and F lydian (or possibly D dorian). The next phrase begins in the fifth measure in a conventional manner but then moves to either an A \flat mixolydian sound or possibly an E \flat minor pentatonic one. Note that this line resolves on beat four of the sixth measure to an A nat-

ural, although Marsalis plays with the ending motif, sometimes resolving to a note that clashes with the chord being played.

There are many things to be learned from a solo such as this one. It is important to remember that playing faster lines is only one piece of the puzzle. A high level of comfort with the tempo is another, as is being able to think in a grounded manner. There are many ways to build these skills. Perhaps the most common is to simply start slowly with a metronome and gradually bump up the tempo. Whatever your method, you will find that the inevitable breakthrough is a truly memorable experience in your practicing, as it has such a profound effect on your overall playing.

DB

MATT SHEVITZ IS A SAXOPHONIST AND EDUCATOR BASED IN CHICAGO. HE TEACHES AT HAROLD WASHINGTON COLLEGE, WHERE HE IS ALSO THE MUSIC PROGRAM COORDINATOR. VISIT HIM ONLINE AT MATTSHEVITZ.COM.

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Samson Meteor Mic USB Technology, Vintage Class

Recording audio directly to computer has become quite common, even among the most casual users. Until recently, getting decent results required not only a quality microphone but also an additional external audio interface and preamp. Samson Technologies has taken a giant leap toward simplifying the recording process with the introduction of its Meteor USB mic.

"We asked ourselves if there was something we could do to combine art and technology, and we thought the USB mic market was the perfect place to start," said Ira Cary Blanco, of Samson's Marketing, Media & Artist Relations department. "We knew the product had to function and perform very well, but it also had to be pleasing to the eye."

One of the most outstanding features of the Meteor is its industrial design, which is reminiscent of the classic Shure model 55 mics. Housed in a durable zinc casing, the mic boasts sleek curves and a chrome-plated finish. One of my favorite aspects of the Meteor is the foldout tripod leg panels.

Setting up the Meteor takes just a few seconds. Just connect via the USB port and select the device in your Windows control panel or Mac system preferences. You are now ready to

record directly to your favorite audio (or video) software. The Meteor has a built-in 1/8-inch stereo out jack for latency-free monitoring with a volume control and mute button. There is also a light that shows mute status and flashes red to indicate audio signal clipping.

The Meteor uses a large 25mm, single-cardioid pattern diaphragm with a flat frequency response and a 20Hz-to-20kHz range. The on-board A/D converters deliver 16-bit CD-quality audio at 44kHz. I tested the microphone on a va-

riety of acoustic instruments plus vocals. The audio quality is good, and the mic is smooth and quiet. The tripod legs allowed me to quickly and accurately position the capsule at the best recording angle, and I love the latency-free monitoring, which is useful when overdubbing tracks.

Considering the Meteor's durability, portability and ultra-cool retro design, it is definitely worth the rather painless \$99 street price.

—Keith Baumann

Ordering info: samsontech.com



Zildjian Super 7A, Dennis Chambers Sticks Tip-Top Sonic Options

New specialty sticks from Zildjian offer a fresh look at the popular 7A size with the Super 7A and the addition of a nylon-tip Dennis Chambers Artist Series stick. Both are made of American hickory and give drummers many different sonic options behind the drumset.

The Zildjian Super 7A augments the classic 7A design by being slightly longer, improving reach. It also seems a little larger in diameter (compared to other brands' 7A models), and the shoulder is more substantial, giving it more weight at the end. This gives you more of a 5A feel, while retaining the "lightness" of a 7A—what a wonderful combination.

Two tip options are available. The wood-tip model has a round bead that brings out mellower, darker tones in cymbals without sacrificing stick definition. This also helps achieve a fuller sound from the drums. The nylon-tip version offers an



egg-shaped tip. It provides excellent stick definition and a brighter sound than its wood-tipped counterpart. Both models feature a matte-type finish, which feels great in the hands and provides excellent grip.

Zildjian's Artist Series sticks offer a new version of the Dennis Chambers model with a nylon tip. The round, black nylon tips are designed to leave no marks on heads or cymbals. They provide a defined, brighter sound on the cymbals than a wood tip, while also producing a meatier low-end sound out of the drums. The overall feel is more like a 5A, but with a slightly longer length. The shoulder is substantial, providing a

beefier hi-hat sound and wicked shoulder crash. The finish is glossy but provides enough tack to keep it from becoming slippery.

The drumstick market is unquestionably a crowded one. With literally hundreds of models to choose from, Zildjian has found a niche with its Super 7A. It offers a little more reach, wood and nylon options, and a great balance and feel. The Dennis Chambers model is a great stick, but you pay more for the "Artist" aspect. All models sound great on the drums/cymbals and feel good in the hands; they are highly recommended.

—Ryan Bennett

Ordering info: zildjian.com



Cannonball Arezzo Piacere Clarinet

Premium Professionalism

Cannonball, known for making a splash in affordable new saxophone and trumpet models, has expanded its instrument line with a fine offering of clarinets. Cannonball Arezzo clarinets include the student model Zeloso, the semi-pro Fiore, the professional Veloce and the premium professional Piacere model.

The Piacere premium professional model, reviewed here, came with two barrels and two bells—one each of the traditional grenadilla wood and the other of cocobolo wood. The cocobolo wood bell and barrel were “goblet style,” presumably for a darker and more focused sound. I was surprised at the significant difference I could hear and feel with the different barrels and bells.

The Piacere is available in silver-plated or gold-plated keys. The joint tenons are well fitted and have metal rings for solid joint protection. Other notable features are the alternate keywork, including an alternative left-hand E \flat /A \flat key and an extension on the G \sharp key for the first finger of the right hand. Of particular interest was the keywork on the register key (upper joint thumb) with its smooth, tapered design and natural feel.

I tried the Piacere using my regular setups, which include a Vandoren B45 13 for most performance situations and a larger Vandoren 5JB with lower-strength reeds for jazz and big band.

I had the opportunity to perform on the Piacere in a theater pit orchestra. The tonal quality of the standard grenadilla barrel and bell was outstanding, making for a pleasant playing experience. I found the instrument to be fluid and responsive with a certain edge and projection that was appropriate for my pit engagement. The instrument felt solid, with just a little bit more resistance than the R13 on my setup. The scale was even, and the keywork felt natural and well regulated right out of the case. I was able to push the instrument to my limit as well as have comfortable control of the upper register, which was full and in tune. The throat tones spoke clearly and had more of the open, “round,” almost flute-like quality we strive to achieve.

The alternative left-hand E \flat /A \flat key took a little bit of practice for me, as I had a tendency to catch it on my finger, but that should be attributed more to my hand positioning rather than the key location. How many times I have wished for that key on certain passages! It would be a great addition to have the full dexterous use of these alternative keys in your arsenal.

Additional features of the Piacere include hand-undercut tone holes along with professional adjusting and regulation. Kudos to Cannonball on a superior instrument.

—John Ruff

Ordering info: cannonballmusic.com

Phaeton Piccolo Trumpet

Easy Response

Stepping into the piccolo trumpet arena might have been a bold move for the Phaeton Trumpet Co., but the PHT-4079BSG professional piccolo trumpet certainly seems ready to compete. Taking its inspiration from the Spanish-made Stomvi piccolo, the Phaeton horn features a medium .450-inch/11.4mm bore, four piston valves, an interchangeable internal thread-connection bell receiver, an all-silver-plate or 18K Trim Kit (including the bell), and A and B \flat mouthpiece receiver pipes.

I was immediately struck by the solid slotting and the easy response of the horn. It has a broad-blowing feeling that freed me up and allowed me to think less about the way I usually need to approach playing a pic and devote more



thought to the shape and flow of the music. I enjoyed the option of switching the silver- and gold-plated bells. They both sounded and felt different, and I can see the benefit of having the option to switch up the feel, sound and response of the horn. The valves feel great, and their gold plating draws your attention to the horn's unique look.

—Mike Pavlik

Ordering info: pjamusic.com



Drake Stan Getz Legend Series

Signature Tenor Sax Mouthpiece

Drake Mouthpieces is establishing itself as a significant mouthpiece maker focused on the needs of the modern saxophone player, showing great deference for vintage sax mouthpieces and the sounds that came out of them. Most intriguing is proprietor Aaron Drake's collaboration with Bev Getz, Stan's daughter, in a quest to make an “enhanced” replica of the mouthpiece Getz played toward the end of his career. The result is the Stan Getz Legend series, a hand-finished resin mouthpiece with no baffle, a beveled shank and an impeccably finished tip and facing that vaguely resembles a rubber Otto Link. Getz's mouthpiece measured out to .085 inch (5*), but Drake offers 5*, 6* and 7* models.

I played both the 6* and 7*, with Rico Jazz Select Unfiled reeds (4M on the 6*, 4S on the 7*). Both of these mouthpieces play very easily, are free-blowing and display a wide range of tonal colors. They are both more aggressive than I was expecting, with plenty of pop and hair-trigger responsiveness. In fact, the extremely sensitive response made me think of driving a really peppy car—I was impressed and at the same time wished for greater nuance when I gave it more air. Projection is certainly not a problem, which suggests a rich array of overtones, and reeds seemed to respond well in all dynamic ranges.

The good news is that Drake's Stan Getz Legend series is a well made mouthpiece. The not-quite-so-good news is that Getz made his sound the old-fashioned way: He earned it. Good mouthpieces don't make you sound like someone; they allow you to sound your best. Players looking for a high-quality mouthpiece in the Otto Link hard-rubber vein should definitely try this latest offering from Drake.

—Nic Meyer

Ordering info: drakemouthpieces.com

{1} HIGHLY EVOLVED DRUMMERS

Hudson Music has published *The Evolution of Jazz Drumming*, by Danny Gottlieb, a book/DVD/mp3 package that presents a comprehensive historical analysis of the artists who created and defined modern jazz drumming. Designed as a guide and workbook for the high school, college-level or professional drummer, its content is based on a typical 16-week college semester. Gottlieb brings to bear his unique expertise as not just a monster player, but as professor of jazz studies at the University of North Florida. **More info:** hudsonmusic.com



{1}

{2} CLEAN BOOST

The TightBoost from Amptweaker offers a warm, tube-like tone even when pumped—unlike many clean boost pedals. The unit also features a mid EQ control that recreates the coveted tone of a parked wah pedal without cutting off the high end. **More info:** amptweaker.com



{2}

{3} VENUE CONTROL

PreSonus' StudioLive Remote for iPad is a dedicated wireless control software for small-format digital consoles. The software lets any front-of-house sound person control any PreSonus StudioLive series digital mixer channels, auxes, effects, subs and Fat Channel processors from anywhere in a venue. Users can also customize aux mixes and navigate graphic EQ. StudioLive Remote provides multiple views of StudioLive mixer controls. An overview option displays the user's most applied parameters. **More info:** presonus.com



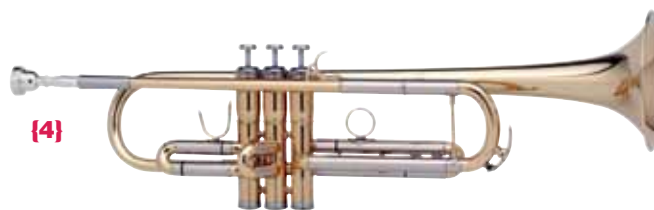
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[4] XTREME TRUMPETING

The new AC334 Xtreme trumpet follows the success of the Antoine Courtois Paris AC430TL Xtreme jazz model. The AC334 Xtreme complements the company's Legend series of B-flat trumpets, the AC333 and AC334 (standard straight and reverse leadpipe models). What makes the AC334 Xtreme different is the basic 334 body with enhanced reinforcement: straight post-to-post bracing on the leadpipe side of the valve block and removable bracing on the bell side of the valve block. In addition, two different tuning slides are included, and a new reverse leadpipe was specifically chosen for the instrument by jazz trumpeter Marcus Printup. **More info:** courtois-paris.com



[5] FIRST FOR SHURE

PGX represents Shure's first foray into digital wireless microphone systems. It combines 24-bit, 96kHz digital audio with extended battery life and operates in the 900MHz band to avoid TV interference. The handheld PGX systems have been designed to match the sounds of such mics as the cardioid SM58 and the supercardioid Beta 58A. **More info:** shure.com



[6] MAXIMUM LOWS

Recent demand for emphasized low end has inspired Remo's Powerstroke Pro bass drumhead. Constructed with 10mm film, it features a Pressure Dampening Profile and permanently mounted acoustic foam that delivers maximum volume and projection while producing controlled highs, accented mids and enhanced low-range frequencies. **More info:** remo.com

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Life-Affirming Soloists

One of the biggest steps in any artist's career is the debut record. Emmet Cohen, a pianist who studies at the University of Miami's Frost School of Music, had been through the process of recording demos for competitions and auditions, but he wasn't quite prepared for fleshing out an entire recording concept.

For *In The Element*, Cohen didn't just pull together a bunch of songs that highlighted his abilities as a pianist—he had to think about how the tunes reflected his musical beliefs. “The record has to be able to stand on its own and say something,” Cohen said.

Cohen's disc is only one in a host of playing accomplishments. In April, he completed the final round of the American Pianists Association's Jazz Fellowship Awards in Indianapolis. He also recently won the Kathleen T. and Philip B. Phillips, M.D. Jazz Piano Competition in Pensacola, Fla.

The pianist is far enough along in his university studies that he can focus solely on music classes. And if he happens to be competing and misses a few lectures, his professors understand that it's in the service of becoming a better musician.

Besides, the competitions and the recording only reinforce his dedication as a musician and remind him why he started playing jazz at 15.

“I love composing on the spot and being able to be spontaneous,” Cohen said. “The biggest thing is the interactive and communicative part of the whole thing, which is what I think a lot of people really love.”

Cory Boris, a senior at Kingston High School in New York, won his first DownBeat award this year on trombone. It's a little something extra in what has already been an exciting year. In February, Boris flew to Los Angeles



Emmet Cohen



Cory Boris

to perform with the Grammy Jazz Band during the week-long festivities.

“The music we played was so full of life,” Boris said, “and it was so in the moment.”

Boris said he was initially drawn to the trombone, which he started playing in the school band, because it seemed harder to navigate than other instruments. He liked the challenge.

His next challenge? Navigating through college. Early this spring, he was anxiously waiting to hear back from potential schools, having already been accepted to the Manhattan School of Music and State University of New York-Purchase.

Boris intends to study to be a professional musician, but is extremely realistic about his post-graduate prospects.

“My ultimate goal is to not be starving,” Boris said. “Everyone says that being a musician can be risky,” he noted. “But my teacher says that if you're prepared and like what you do and have a talent for it, you can create opportunities. I agree with that.”

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Berkeley High School Combo A

Winning Big Through Mutual Respect

This year's winners in the jazz group/combo category prove that there is no perfect recipe for collaboration, especially since groups strategize differently when it comes to staying in sync and keeping each other in check.

For Combo A at Berkeley High School in Berkeley, Calif., Director Scott Dailey said the strategy is "based partly on friendship, partly on musical taste and partly on level of ability."

A performance at a well-respected house of jazz like Yoshi's Jazz Club in nearby Oakland can induce butterflies for seasoned professionals. But the completely self-sustained quintet didn't falter as it prepared for the Yoshi's gig, in addition to a coveted slot at the Monterey Jazz Festival Next Generation competition.

"There's an added element of urgency or seriousness given that Monterey is a big deal," said drummer Lev Facher. "At least we treat it that way, but in terms of process, it's pretty much the same."

The process, said vibraphonist Grant Miliken, lacks rigidity compared to instructor-run sessions. Combo A takes itself seriously, but not too much, and this contributes to the group's chemistry. The student-run weekly rehearsals are structured to some extent. Recently, they've been peppered with the bebop tones of Freddie Hubbard and some relatable local flavor from Berkeley High alum Joshua Redman.

"A lot of times, it's a different kind of learning experience," said upright bassist Erik Shiboski. "Usually, a teacher leads the combo with things he may already know through experience. But learning how to function in a group that's entirely self-sufficient? It's a different dynamic."

In other cases, some interactive instruction partly determines a combo's musical maturity. At Jazzschool Advanced High School (also in Berkeley), director Mike Zilber treats Workshop I like an octet of pros within a learning environment. He limits hand-holding

to a minimum, but by playing along with the combo, he said he can identify individual strengths of the students. Zilber attributed the success of the Workshop I group to the absence of competition among players.

"I'm not a big advocate of jazz as a contact sport," Zilber said. "I'd like students to perform for the sake and love of performing and working together cooperatively, not competitively."

Rehearsals stray from technical exercises and repetition. Workshop I is all about stylistics. Zilber advocates principles rather than patterns, and believes the concept of learning a John Coltrane tune in 12 keys is unproductive.

"We sit there and we ask, 'Why does it sound good?'" Zilber said. "What is he doing that's making that line work?" There's a lot of stuff we try to get them to play musically, to go back to the old jazz verity of telling a story."

For the Fantasy V Group at the Brubeck Institute at University of the Pacific in Stockton, Calif., getting back to traditional jazz verities means a combination of intensive personal study and assistance from the masters themselves. Of the five members, many have participated in outside intensive study sessions, from the Brubeck Summer Jazz Colony to individual mentorship under Bill Dobbins and Ray Wright.

Because each member of Fantasy V possesses his own individual style, disputes are inevitable, said pianist Noah Kellman. In order to avoid confrontation and maintain a solid overall dynamic, he explained the group's innate level of compromise. He said, "We have become increasingly effective in discussing these issues and discovering a resolution that works for everyone."

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Vocal Winners Gaze Upward and Outward

Most teenagers who study jazz can probably relate to Laila Smith. As a young jazz singer surrounded by peers who listened to Britney Spears, Smith was seen as an outsider for looking up to Carmen McRae.

"My friends would hear me scatting underneath my breath, and they would think I was so weird," recalled Smith, now a sophomore at Marin School of the Arts at Novato High School in Novato, Calif.

She now boasts a busy singing schedule on top of her school work, but also spends time writing and reading poetry. At school, she thinks of herself as a sponge, absorbing information, both musical and otherwise. Along with Smith's victory as a jazz vocalist, she also won as a classical soloist.

The college application process is still a few years away, and because of her myriad interests, she envisions herself possibly breaking away from the music-major mold.

"I want to be like Kurt Elling and go study philosophy or something," she said, adding that whatever she does, jazz will always have a presence in her life.

Ariel Pocock, currently a senior at Newport High School in Bellevue, Wash., will likely be leaving her hometown for college next year, but she knows the Seattle area helped shape who she is as a performer.

"It's a great place to be a teenager because there are a lot of gigs and a lot of shows for under-21 kids," she said.

Pocock, the daughter of two classical pianists, started playing jazz piano at 8, but only began singing recently. She credits Newport High with helping her excel as a musician.

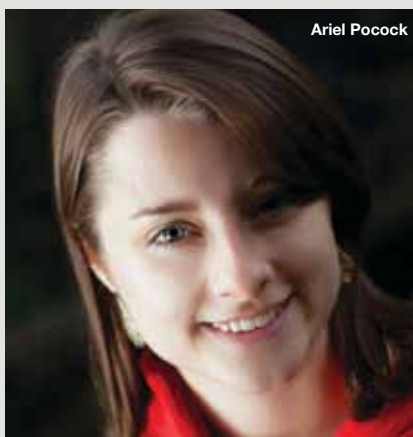
"My school is lucky to have a really great music program," she said. "We have good teachers and good funding, and we get to go to a lot of festivals."

Claire Dickson of Medford, Mass., also came to music through her parents. Her dad started playing Ella Fitzgerald records around the house, and Dickson gravitated toward the sound, listening to singers and instrumentalists every chance she got.

"At first I didn't think I would sing jazz because I just loved listening to it," she said. "I



Laila Smith



Ariel Pocock



Claire Dickson

didn't think it was something that I could sing."

She's recently been exploring the Miles Davis catalog and focusing on where she can study improvisation. Dickson said she enjoys scatting and looks to horn players for guidance because "a lot of vocalists don't improvise."

The 14-year-old is homeschooled, but said learning jazz at home isn't that much different than studying it at school. There are a few benefits, however.

"If I have a gig that goes a little late, I don't always have to wake up for school in the morning as early as everyone else," she said. "It works out nicely that way."

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The winners in the best large ensemble category have two things in common: a repertoire that expands beyond the Great American Songbook, and a fearless leader to keep the group in check.

St. Olaf College's conservatory curriculum has deep classical roots, but Jazz I ensemble director Dave Hagedorn maintains a reserve of material that's far from straightforward.

"A lot of them have not been exposed to many different styles of group jazz writing," Hagedorn said. "It's my job to program current as well as historically significant music."

According to pianist Shane Allen, Hagedorn—who once brought in a Southeastern Indian veena player to perform with the ensemble—expects Jazz I to be a "chameleon band," able to perform a wide variety of tunes. The students, who have undergone private instruction since elementary school, use their classical chops to help them sight-read and "be more conscious of balance and blend," said trumpet player Anda Tanaka.

Amid the stringent framework of their other, more formal ensembles, the Jazz I students discuss Bill Evans, Joe Phillips, Ornette Coleman and Fred Sturn as musical influences. But it's the light-heartedness and spontaneity of Hagedorn's teaching style that keeps students on their toes and focused on the material.

"Dave loves to open up solos and change things up in the heat of the performance," said lead alto saxophonist Melanie Brooks. "Those types of moments cannot be rehearsed or recreated, and that's what I love the most about jazz."

Trumpet player Tim McCarthy says the small-town feel of St. Olaf directly influences the nature of the ensemble.

"The small campus has a big influence on our chemistry," McCarthy said. "If you need to collaborate with someone else, you just find them on campus. Everybody knows each other and you see people around all the time."

For band director Curtis Gaesser, the Folsom High School Jazz Band I ensemble (in Folsom, Calif.) is an entirely different animal. It's a pedigreed jazz program that receives—as Gaesser puts it—"a steady flow of jazz students," the majority from Sutter and Folsom Middle Schools. This year, the group is significantly younger. Gaesser considers this year's jazz band to be more of a "two-year journey" into the next school year, and believes the demographic contributes to the group's ambition and exponential advancement, personally and musically.

"There are only a couple seniors, so the growth has been tremendous, as human beings and as musicians," Gaesser said. "Sometimes I've got to keep up."

Like the St. Olaf ensemble, the repertoire among Jazz Band I is quite vast. Gaesser's selection of material is partly influenced by acts the group saw while performing in Europe, including the Maria Schneider Orchestra. In order to maintain their stellar chemistry, Gaesser said the students make sure to keep their egos in check.

"I always use this analogy: 'How many of you think the 23rd second violin player in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is not a good player? That person is just as important as the person sitting in the front row.'" **DB**

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Bertram and Judith Kohl building designer Jonathan Kurtz (left), actor Avery Brooks, Wendell Logan and Oberlin Conservatory of Music Dean David H. Stull



Wendell Logan's Quiet Triumph

One of jazz educator Wendell Logan's strengths may have prevented him from receiving the acclaim he deserved during his lifetime. Logan, the founder and chair of the jazz department at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music in Ohio, died last June 15 at 69 after a brief illness. His colleagues and accomplished former students have loudly applauded his influence, primarily because that's the kind of praise Logan did not proclaim for himself.

"Wendell was about getting the job done, not tooting his own horn," said bassist Leon Lee Dorsey, who graduated from Oberlin in 1981. "He was prolific as a composer and educator, but it wasn't the same as when you look at educators who have published play-along books and other pedagogy stuff. He just carved out his own thing, and it wasn't mass-marketed, and that's why it flew under the radar."

Logan's efforts as a champion for jazz education received attention shortly before and after his death in the spring of 2010 when Oberlin dedicated its new Bertram and Judith Kohl Building. This multimedia center for its jazz department is a \$24 million state-of-the-art home for the music that Logan always knew belonged on equal footing with European classical traditions in the conservatory. The May 1 ribbon-cutting ceremony felt like as much a celebration for Logan as it was for the college. But while the building is a structural testimonial to his work, the impact he made on his students' lives is even more significant.

James McBride was one of those students. Today, he's a highly regarded saxophonist and author (his books include *The Color Of Water*). But McBride was in a far different position as a freshman at Oberlin in 1975 when he tried out

for Logan's jazz ensemble.

"I didn't have enough money for a saxophone, so I auditioned on trombone," McBride said. "I didn't make it. When I explained that I didn't have a sax, Wendell arranged for me to get one, and then he gave me lessons. I would come to his office, and he gave me those lessons privately himself."

Growing up in the small town of Thomson, Ga., Logan learned early on about the importance of determination. While he played trumpet and soprano saxophone, his own musical emphasis was on composition. He studied 12-tone music—alongside jazz, blues, gospel and opera—and received his bachelor's degree from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee. Logan went on to receive a master's degree in composition at Southern Illinois University and a doctorate from the University of Iowa. One of his large-scale concert works, *Doxology Opera: The Doxy Canticles*, premiered in 2001.

Ever since Logan joined the faculty at Oberlin in 1973, he advocated the idea that performance is just as important as any works on paper. This was one reason why he worked tirelessly to create a jazz major at the college (a program was established in 1989). But this belief also came through in how he taught.

"During one of the ensemble's rehearsals of one of my compositions, he reminded me to always thank the musicians," said pianist Jon Jang, who studied with Logan in the 1970s. "It's simple, but it's also profound. Wendell encouraged us to pursue the highest and purest motive of the music."

That purity came through in the way Logan addressed not just students, but other faculty, according to guitarist Bob Ferrazza, the current chair of Oberlin's jazz department.

"Wendell was extremely sincere and honest, and that meant he would tell you exactly what he thought of something," Ferrazza said. "He wasn't going to sugarcoat, or waste time trying to phrase something in a nice way. That came from a pure, sincere place. He had strong opinions, but could back up those opinions with his life."

Dorsey added that while he and his musician friends "still joke about the comments that Wendell made when we didn't play right," they wouldn't have "traded that experience for anything in the world." And while Logan was so immersed in jazz history that he could explain the importance of everyone from Buddy Bolden through contemporary free-jazz players, Dorsey added, "He could speak from a sense of street smarts to astute scholarship without even blinking."

Logan expected his students to be just as well versed, and to express it all.

"He would take small ensembles and make us play the blues in every key," McBride said. "He would force us all to write original pieces. If they were no good, he would say so. And he would talk to drummers about tap dancers, and that rhythm is more important than melody in your solos. He was a great believer in space, in listening, and he would make sax players listen to trumpet solos, since it would help you learn to speak in a different language."

At the same time, Logan demonstrated that the pride that results through this work ultimately means the opposite of elitism.

"We learned from Wendell that music was the great equalizer," McBride explained. "It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, if you sit down at the table to eat, you're the same as the next person."

DB



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Pianist Shelton Berg isn't just educating. He's breaking down barriers.

As the dean of the University of Miami's Frost School of Music since 2007, Berg's classical students work in what he calls "entrepreneurial" combo-style units. Jazz trumpeters become Pro Tools engineers. Both types of students enroll in mandatory music business courses. With his cutting-edge experiential music program, students tote laptops along with their instruments.

"The role of a school is to help students have the tools to be a success in an ever-expanding world of music," Berg said. "It becomes an ear-training experience, a composition experience, an analysis experience."

The school's Henry Mancini Institute has allowed Berg to integrate classical, opera, jazz, music business and music education into a pastiche of student-driven projects and collaborations, including television specials and major label productions. The Frost School also draws more guest artists than any other music program. Berg himself hosts new artists almost every week, and combos learn alongside the

likes of Chris Potter, Matt Wilson, Ignacio Berroa and Dave Douglas.

Berg, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the University of Houston, has sat in with a list of venerable jazz greats and recorded with a range of acts that includes Ray Charles and the band Chicago. He's also orchestrated feature films and composed for television. Among educators, his book, *Jazz Improvisation: The Goal-Note Method*, is considered to be a groundbreaking text.

As an educator, Berg emphasizes mastery of jazz fundamentals such as modes and upper structures as catalysts toward individual expression.

"Style is the rejection and acceptance of influences," Berg said. "If you're a visual artist, you might want to roller-skate across the canvas. That might be what your ultimate goal is. But you know what? You should learn to draw the human hand, a still life, a portrait. Learn to do those things so that when you roll across the canvas with paint on your skates, there's something that informs that."

Likewise, Berg requires students to tran-



Shelton Berg

scribe impeccably. Students that can perform a technique 100 percent of the time, he says, are able to calibrate how much they do it as a "creative decision, not a decision based on limitations."

When trying to connect with his pupils, Berg believes that trust, not virtuosity, is the key.

"Virtuosity is only in service of music," he said. "It's not how fast you play, how hip your lick was. It's that one note, the phrase nobody will ever forget. It's trusting the power inside of you, and to listen for it, to wait for it, to find it." **DB**

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Teaching Beyond Western Horizons

It's not every day one hears about a U.S. high school that has its own Indonesian gamelan.

At Canyon Crest Academy in San Diego, Calif., music education expands beyond Western sheet music. For Anne Whattoff, vocal program coordinator, and Amy Villanova, instrumental music coordinator, formulating a curriculum means risk-taking and collaboration.

"The support by the administration to dream big is here," Whattoff said. "Everyone is so in tune to the arts and ready to make things happen."

After graduating from San Diego State University, Whattoff did post-graduate research in ethnomusicology, studying everywhere from Finland to Ghana. She subsequently brought this global influence to the classroom, establishing a world music curriculum. Students master their instruments by embracing other cultures. They attend popular bamboo flute workshops, master the art of Indian dance, and comprehend West African storytelling rhythms. Villanova, who received a master's in music from the University of Southern California, started a Brazilian samba line that performs at school athletic events.

"I'm not trying to create a museum, but something that is relevant to the kids," said

Whattoff, who also instructs a rock band class. "The more exposure you have, the better off you're going to be when you make your own music."

Canyon Crest's Envision program—which Whattoff will chair next year—is targeted at high school musicians who "are ready to face challenges." With six disciplines—music, film, dance, theater, electronic arts and visual arts—and multiple collaborative projects that integrate these areas, music students are not just getting an education. They're getting an all-encompassing experience.

It's a music program that vests itself in fundamentals like breath placement, understanding time and listening. The curriculum hosts projects such as graphic scores, wherein visual art students compose paintings to the tunes of music students. Conservatory musicians become modern dancers in Whattoff and Villanova's *Stomp*-like performances, or set soundtracks for dance majors during the duo's ventures they've called "Music In Motion" and "The History Of Jazz In 20 Minutes Or Less." The latter program allowed Villanova's students



Anne Whattoff (left) and Amy Villanova

to select their own compositions based on their perception of jazz evolution, while also discovering the art behind the music's transitions.

With Villanova and Whattoff sharing concerts much of the time, guest artists such as horn player Mike Bogart (Tower of Power) often instruct instrumentalists and vocalists simultaneously. Currently, the jazz band has partnered with the choral director and orchestra for a revue of the musical *Chess*.

"That's one of the tenets of the Envision program," Villanova said. "I've been at other schools and they say, 'Oh yeah, we do projects.' Our school is excellent about collaborating, and it's not just the music department." **DB**

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Martin Bejerano, *faculty mentor*

Jazz Soloist

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Emmet Cohen, *piano*

Martin Bejerano, *faculty mentor*

Jazz Soloist

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Gabe Medd, *trumpet*

Chuck Bergeron, *faculty mentor*

Blues/Pop/Rock Soloist

UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE WINNERS

Alex Weitz, *tenor saxophone*

Gary Keller, *faculty mentor*

Jazz Group

UNDERGRADUATE OUTSTANDING

COLLEGE PERFORMANCES

The Stamps Jazz Quintet

Chuck Bergeron, *director*

Jazz Soloist

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COLLEGE PERFORMANCES

Dan Andrews, *alto saxophone*

Chuck Bergeron, *faculty mentor*

Original Composition - Lead Sheet

UNDERGRADUATE OUTSTANDING

COLLEGE PERFORMANCES

Sam Yulsman, "Song for
Robert Rauschenberg"

Chuck Bergeron, *faculty mentor*

Jazz Arrangement

GRADUATE COLLEGE WINNERS

Kathleen Hollingsworth, "My Favorite Things"

Larry Lapin, *faculty mentor*

Classical Soloist

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José Valentino Ruiz, *flute*

Trudy Kane, *faculty mentor*

Large Jazz Ensemble

GRADUATE COLLEGE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES

Studio Jazz Band

Stephen Guerra, *director*

Vocal Jazz Soloist

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Timothy Buchholz, *voice*

Larry Lapin, *faculty mentor*

Original Composition - Lead Sheet

GRADUATE COLLEGE OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCES

Gary Allen Thomas, "A New Beginning"

Don Coffman, *faculty mentor*

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JUDGING CRITERIA

Performance Criteria

- 1) Overall sound
- 2) Presence or authority
- 3) Proper interpretation of idiom
- 4) Improvisation or creativity
- 5) Technique
- 6) Intonation
- 7) Phrasing
- 8) Dynamics
- 9) Accurate rhythm/time
- 10) Material

Engineering Criteria

- 1) Perspective: balance of channels; amount and type of reverb; blend (Do all sounds seem to have been performed at the same time and place? Do solos seem natural or do they stick out?).
- 2) Levels: tape saturation or other overload, undermodulation resulting in excessive hiss, consistency of levels, left/right balance, etc.
- 3) Transparency and apparent transient response.
- 4) Special effects: Are they appropriate? Do they add or detract?
- 5) Extraneous noises, clicks, hum, etc. (for a non-live performance, any non-musical sound).
- 6) Professional etiquette: labeling of box for tape speed and format, labeling of cuts, leadering.

Awards & Prizes

DB Award Plaque is awarded to the music department of each winning middle school, high school and college.

DB Award Certificate is awarded to each individual winner and director of winning ensembles.

Judges

Jim Anderson: Recording engineer and producer; Former chair of the Clive Davis Department of Recorded Music at New York University.

David Baker: Professor of Music and Chairman of the Jazz Department, Indiana U., Bloomington; author/composer/arranger/multi-instrumentalist.

Jennifer Barnes: Vocalist, touring clinician, director of college vocal jazz ensembles.

Bob Belden: Saxophonist, composer, bandleader and producer of new albums and reissues.

Janice Borla: Vocalist; Director of Vocal Jazz at North Central College; vocal jazz camp founder.

Orbert Davis: Trumpeter/clinician; professor at University of Illinois, Chicago.

David Demsey: Saxophonist; William Paterson University Coordinator of Jazz Studies.

Bunky Green: Alto saxophonist; Director of Jazz Studies at the University of North Florida.

Les Hooper: Composer/arranger for films, TV, commercials, orchestras and records; clinician.

Kevin Mahogany: Vocalist, record label owner and educator.

Miles Osland: Saxophonist; University of Kentucky Director of Jazz Studies.

James Warrick: Clinician; former Director of Jazz Studies at New Trier High School.

David Weiss: Trumpeter, leader of the New Jazz Composers Octet, winner of Chamber Music America composition grant.

Phil Wilson: Trombonist; member of Berklee College faculty.

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Vancouver Summertime Course Combines Jazz and Faith

The links between jazz and religion have always found expression in inspired performances and recordings, from Duke Ellington's *Sacred Concerts* to John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme* and John McLaughlin's *My Goal's Beyond*. With a specific slant designed for those interested in jazz's connections with Christianity, this summer Regent College in Vancouver, British Columbia, will present "All That Jazz: A Christian Take." A weeklong class, running from June 27 through July 1, this course will overlap with and take advantage of concerts and other related activities occurring at this year's Vancouver Jazz Festival (June 24–July 3). Enrollment information is available by e-mailing registration@regent-college.edu.

As the announcement for the class states, "Jazz music provides an intense and vivid reminder of key themes in Christian faith and life: the importance of knowing the 'standards,' the centrality of freedom and improvisation, passing the lead from one player to another, and the dynamic interaction among players and audiences." The course will involve some jazz history as it relates to biblical discipleship through lectures, discussions, video and audio clips. There will also be live music in class, with readings, interviews and "field trips" to the jazz festival.

"This course grows out of the most popular, fun adult education course I ever taught," said David Gill, a professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and one of the two instructors for the class.

Gill, an avid jazz fan and educator for more than 40 years, said, "That experience was a six-week course at First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley. I think for all 50 to 70 of us in there week after week, it was a blissful experience hearing the music, thinking about it, and reflecting on its parallels in the Christian life."

Referring to the course's original title and this year's Regent College offering, Gill adds, "This summer course is FaithJazz 2.0, a huge step up on the same topic."

Teaching the course with Gill will be Bill Edgar, a professor of apologetics at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia and an accomplished jazz pianist. Edgar's academic background includes undergraduate work in musicology at Harvard University, and he earned a doctorate of theology degree at the University of Geneva. He is writing a book connecting jazz and spirituality. Edgar also leads



the gospel-jazz band Renewal. His academic specialties include West African and African American music.

"Anyone who knows and loves this music will recognize that it's America's original contribution to the arts," Edgar said. "Jazz has great vitality, and it articulates a narrative that moves from deep sorrow to inextinguishable joy. There's a soul in jazz; the soul of African Americans who endured slavery and encountered a message of hope in the Gospel, which brought them out of slavery and into emancipation."

Classes include "Jazz: Intro, History and Potential as Witness to God's Truth," "Knowing the Standards: Improvisation, Creativity and Freedom," "Passing the Lead, Taking A Solo," "Addressing and Expressing the Gamut of Human Experience" and "Engaging Those Around You, Crossing Cultures Around the Globe." Book discussions will include analyses of Robert Gellinas' *Finding The Groove: Composing A Jazz-Shaped Faith* and Wynton Marsalis' *Moving To Higher Ground: How Jazz Can Change Your Life*. One class plans to encompass the range of emotions and history associated with classic jazz, moving from The agony of Billie Holiday's "Strange Fruit" to the romance of "The Way You Look Tonight" to the celebration of "Sing, Sing, Sing."

"There's jazz for every human experience," Gill said. "So, too, and more profoundly, Biblical faith accompanies and guides us through all the highs and lows, through the triumphs, disasters, through excitement and boredom, through every moment of life, from the solo times to small ensembles to big bands."

Both instructors add that they want to show how jazz is a microcosm of life itself.

—John Ephland



Juilliard Celebration: Juilliard alumnus Christian McBride (left) and David Sanborn celebrated the 10th anniversary of Juilliard Jazz with a concert at Juilliard's Peter Jay Sharp Theater in New York on March 31. The concert featured such alumni as saxophonist Sharel Cassity and trumpeter Justin Kisor and Juilliard Jazz artistic director Carl Allen with such guests as saxophonist Benny Golson. Juilliard has also announced that it will present an honorary doctoral degree to Herbie Hancock. Details: juilliard.edu

UCLA, Monk Bond: The University of California Los Angeles Herb Alpert School of Music and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz have launched a new partnership. The collaboration will enable six to eight musicians to study and perform together in an ensemble during a two-year institute program, with the option of pursuing the newly created master of music degree in jazz at the Herb Alpert School of Music. As part of the program, visiting jazz artists and students will present master classes at UCLA and community outreach programs across Los Angeles. Each student will provide free music instruction at a Los Angeles public school at least once a week. The students will also perform internationally.

Details: arts.ucla.edu; monkinstitute.org

Jazzschool Wins Again: Jazzschool's Monday Night Studio Band of Berkeley, Calif., under the direction of Keith Johnson, won first place for the third consecutive year following its performance on April 3 at the Next Generation Festival (41st Annual National High School Competition) in nearby Monterey. Details: jazzschool.org

Berklee Release: Berklee College of Music's student-run label Jazz Revelation Records has released its eighth disc, *Octave*. The disc includes contributions from Daymir Gonzalez, who is the first Cuban living on the island to be awarded a full Berklee scholarship. Details: berklee.edu

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Chucho Valdés

In a DownBeat Blindfold Test first, the live session with Chucho Valdés during the 2010 Voll-Damm Barcelona International Jazz Festival was also billed as a “Winefold Test.” Not only were songs sampled and discussed by Valdés in his inaugural Blindfold Test, but a selection of nine wines, chosen by sommelier César Cánovas, was also served. Each wine was paired with a specific musical selection. The event took place at the world-famous, jazz-friendly wine club Monvínic, which not only has thousands of wines from around the globe, but also has an extensive library on wine production. Valdés spoke in Spanish, which was translated by Maria Echeverria.

Joe Zawinul & The Zawinul Syndicate

“Changes” (from *Lost Tribes*, 1992, Columbia) Zawinul, acoustic piano, keyboards; Randy Bernsen, guitar; Gerald Veasley, bass; Mike Baker, drums; Bobby Thomas Jr., hand drums.

Wine: Heymann-Löwenstein, Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, Fantasie der Schieferterrassen Brut 2008 (Riesling, Germany).

This is one of the music world’s biggest sounds. This is the world of Joe Zawinul. I don’t know this song or the album, but it’s definitely Joe’s sound. He’s the one who created his own unique harmonies. In 1966 when he composed “Mercy, Mercy, Mercy,” that was the beginning of his own harmony. He continued with Weather Report. That band was the biggest thing of the ’70s for me, and that led to the Syndicate. Those of us who play the keyboards know Joe Zawinul. To me, he was one of the greatest. I had the honor of becoming a good friend with him. I dedicated a song to him, “Zawinul’s Mambo,” on my last album [*Chucho’s Steps*].

Randy Weston & His African Rhythms Sextet

“Loose Wig” (from *The Storyteller: Live At Dizzy’s Club Coca-Cola*, 2010, Motéma) Weston, piano; T.K. Blue, alto saxophone; Benny Powell, trombone; Alex Blake, bass; Lewis Nash, drums; Neil Clarke, percussion.

Wine: Steenberg, Constantia, Merlot 2007 (South Africa).

I know the musicians because of the sound of their instruments. It’s easy to confuse the pianist with [Thelonious] Monk, but I can hear the sounds of the band, which means it’s definitely not Monk. But it is the world of Monk. You can hear those classic minor seconds in there. He has a beautiful touch and a very imaginative way of playing. I like this composition very much. It’s Randy Weston? Ahhh, I could hear the connections. Musically he works with an African influence done in the best manner. To me, Randy is not just a reference point but a departure.

Omar Sosa

“Mis Tres Notas” (from *Ballads—1997–2000*, 2005, Otá Records) Sosa, piano; Rahsaan Fredericks, acoustic bass; Jesús Díaz, percussion.

Wine: Viñático, Ycoden-Daute-Isora, Malvasía 2005 (Spain).

[With] this type of ballad, it’s very difficult to recognize who it is. The playing is similar to others. But the sounds remind me of Gonzalo Rubalcaba, even though it’s not him. But I hear the way he expresses himself. It’s a Latin ballad, and we all tend to play similarly in nature. It’s very lyrical, and there’s a beautiful sound on the piano. So, even though it’s not Gonzalo, it’s very good. [Clue: “You know him.”] Well, if it’s not Gonzalo, it must be Omar Sosa. See, I’m not that deeply in the dark. Omar is from that same school as Gonzalo. They went to the same schools; they studied together; they’re contemporaries. But when I talk about school, I’m talking about the school of playing Latin ballads.



Jelly Roll Morton

“Shreveport Stomp” (from *Jelly Roll Stomp*, 1998, Tradition/Rykodisc, rec’d circa early ’20s) Morton, piano.

Wine: Marcel Lapiere, Beaujolais, Morgon MMVII 2007 (Gamay, France).

This one is difficult. Fats Waller played similarly to this. And I also think of Willie “The Lion” Smith and Earl “Fatha” Hines. Plus, I think a little of Art Tatum, but it’s not him. If it’s James P. Johnson, it’s very early in his career. This is a difficult style to play because there’s no bass or drums. The left hand has to play the rhythm while the right hand improvises. To me, that’s a difficult style. You are alone. You are floating. You are it. But I don’t know who this is. [an audience member guesses Jelly Roll Morton] I thought of Jelly, but didn’t associate him with [the track].

Keith Jarrett

“Shaw ‘Nuff” (from *Yesterdays*, 2009, ECM) Jarrett, piano; Gary Peacock, bass; Jack DeJohnette, drums.

Wine: Sottimano, Barolo, Cottà 2005 (Nebbiolo, Italy).

Keith almost fooled me. At first I thought this could be Bud Powell, but I heard a chord and I knew it was him. I’ve studied his harmonic secrets, and that’s how I figured it out. He plays a substitution that’s unique in today’s music. But at the beginning, it was totally Bud Powell. Did I like it? Who doesn’t like caviar? To me, Keith is a monster. He’s capable of anything.

Danilo Pérez

“Galactic Panama” (from *Providencia*, 2010, Mack Avenue) Pérez, piano; Rudresh Mahanthappa, alto saxophone; Ben Street, bass; Adam Cruz, drums; Jamey Haddad, percussion; Ernesto Diaz, congas.

Wine: Ostler, Central Otago, Sauvignon Blanc Sagittarius 2007 (New Zealand).

I start recognizing pianists when they begin their solos. So, I’m thinking Vijay Iyer. I’ve never heard this tune, but I’ve definitely heard this pianist. It’s not Vijay? Well, whoever this is, he’s a part of the group of younger musicians who play like this—Jason Moran, Matthew Shipp. I know for sure who the saxophone player is. It’s Rudresh Mahanthappa. That’s why I thought Vijay, because of their association. But it could be Danilo. You know, it’s got to be Danilo. No one else plays in his style. It’s his language—atonal scales, polytonalisms. It’s a contemporary sound. **DB**

TO READ THE COMPLETE BLINDFOLD/WINEFOLD TEST, VISIT DOWNBEAT.COM.

THE “BLINDFOLD TEST” IS A LISTENING TEST THAT CHALLENGES THE FEATURED ARTIST TO DISCUSS AND IDENTIFY THE MUSIC AND MUSICIANS WHO PERFORMED ON SELECTED RECORDINGS. THE ARTIST IS THEN ASKED TO RATE EACH TUNE USING A 5-STAR SYSTEM. NO INFORMATION IS GIVEN TO THE ARTIST PRIOR TO THE TEST.



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